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INDIAN RECREATIONS;

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ON THE

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DOMESTIC AND RURAL ECONOMY

OF THE

B 175.

MAHOMMEDANS & HINDOOS.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM TENNANT, L.L.D. M.A. &
AND LATELY ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN IND.A

VOL. I.

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TO THE

KING.

.....

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

THESE inquiries concerning the domeſtic and rural economy of the Hindoos, were originally made as the means of obtaining better information regarding the condition of a numerous people, living in a ſtate of ſociety and manners to me almoſt entirely new: They were communicated to the public, with a view of rendering the inhabitants of theſe remote parts of your Ma-

jeſty's

jeſty's dominions, better known to your ſubjects in Europe; and they are now humbly offered to your Majeſty as a tribute of gratitude for that ſecurity and protection which their author enjoyed, in common with many millions of your ſubjects in the midſt of Aſia.

WHAT reflections may ariſe in your Majeſty's breaſt, on viewing the domeſtic circumſtances, and actual condition of ſo large a portion of the human race, I preſume not to conjecture; but your ſubjects can hardly contemplate without reverence and gratitude, that diſpenſation of Providence which has committed to your Majeſty's protection and care, a more numerous people, and more extenſive territories, than ever fell under the dominion of any European Monarch;

narch; because it has enabled your Councils to govern them with greater wisdom and moderation. During your long, eventful, and prosperous reign, the anarchy consequent on the downfal of the Mogul Empire, has been succeeded by order: The cruel spoliations of contending chieftains have been suspended; arts have been encouraged; several new manufactures have been introduced, and many more have been extended: And while the blessings of security and peace have been conferred upon a numerous people, better means have been supplied them of acquiring the knowledge of truth, and the practice of virtue: The time has arrived, when Asia, which gave the first lessons of civilization to mankind, is destined to receive them back with interest into her bosom; and when India, the peculiar re-

region

gion of deſpotiſm, muſt experience the bleſſings of a mild and rational government.

I am,

May it pleaſe your Majeſty,

Your Majeſty's

Obedient Subject, and

Faithful Servant,

WILLIAM TENNANT.

PREFACE

.....

Of the information contained in theſe volumes, by far the greater part is the reſult of perſonal obſervation, and of inquiries made upon the ſpot, during a reſidence of ſeveral years in different parts of India. The progreſs of the army to which I was attached, preſented to my examination, during that period, a large extent of country, in a line of march of more than three thouſand miles. The duties of my profeſſion obliged me, beſides, to undertake many journies in different directions, where the army did not penetrate; and curioſity often prompted me to make ſhorter excurſions wherever information might be procured.

The

THE different Officers, under whom I ſucceſſively ſerved, far from embarraſſing, by their official authority, encouraged theſe purſuits; and to Lieutenant-General Sir James Craig, Major-Generals Alexander Mackenzie, and Hay Macdowall, I am obliged for ſeveral uſeful topics of diſcuſſion, as well as for the moſt polite indulgence in the diſpoſal of my time, on every occaſion, conſiſtent with the duties of my ſtation in the army.

ANOTHER ſource of information was frequently afforded me by the converſation and writings of ſeveral intelligent natives of India, both Muſſulmans and Hindoos: Whatever was found difficult or obſcure, theſe men were referred to for elucidation, as the beſt qualified to decide on their own manners and inſtitutions. Gholam Hoſſein Khan, Abu Taleb Khan, and Ram Jeet Sing, as often as they were conſulted on doubtful points, ſupplied more correct information; they are men of noble birth and conſiderable rank, but ſtill more diſtinguiſhed among their countrymen, by their extenſive knowledge and reſpectability of character.

My ſtation in the army afforded me frequent opportunity of oral converſation with the moſt intelligent of the Honourable Company's civil and military ſervants; and to their unaffected hoſpitality, and liberal communications, I owe many obligations. With equal pleaſure and advantage I have conſulted the writings of many of thoſe Gentlemen, who from their profeſſional labours, and long reſidence in the country, have become beſt acquainted with its affairs. The works of Sir W. Jones, Dr. Roxburgh, Dr. Hunter, Dr. Fontana, and Captain Hardwick, are not mentioned in literary circles without reſpect and approbation; and of ſome of them the reputation is ſo high as leaves no room for panegyric.

I am not without hope, therefore, that even in this eventful and dangerous period, when literary purſuits are in a great meaſure laid aſide, that by ſome perſons wearied with the buſtle of politics, and the noiſe of war, theſe Recreations may be reſorted to for the amuſement of a leiſure hour, and that by others whoſe views, or thoſe of their friends, are turned to India, they may be peruſed from higher

motives. Whatever may be their fate, they are now committed to the public; and as no writer can be indifferent to what has long been the object of his labour and care, I wait its deciſion with ſome ſolicitude, and will bow to its ſentence with perfect ſubmiſſion.

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ERRATA.

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11 in the note, *for* Bagrat, *read* Bagvat.
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INDIAN RECREATIONS.

INTRODUCTION.

. . . . . .

Calcutta, Sept. 1796.

THE peninſula of Hindoſtan, containing all the principal ſettlements which have been formed by the European nations on the continent of Aſia, is in extent nearly equal to Europe. In geographical language, this name is applied only to that tract which is bounded on the weſt and eaſt by the Indus and the Barrampooter; on the north by the mountains of Thibet and Tartary; and on the ſouth by the river Nirbudda, and the lower boundaries of Bengal and Bahar. The extremity of the peninſula, which contained nearly one half of the Mogul empire, among the Indian geographers, received the appellation of *Deccan*, or South *. In the ancient language

* Vid. Major Rennel's Mem. p. 19. Introd.

of Hindoſtan, this name is not found; the country is in the Sanſcreet ſtyled Bharata. The name of India was adopted by the Greeks, from the Perſians, and is of comparatively modern application *. In a period long before the moſt ancient European records, this part of Aſia had attained to ſome degree of civilization, and had made conſiderable progreſs in the arts of life. Since the earlieſt commencement of authentic hiſtory in Europe, its manufactures, ſcience, and religion, have attracted the attention of every ſtate in that quarter of the world.

Our admiration of what is ancient, has, however, been exceſſive; and prompted hiſtorians for upwards of twenty centuries to exaggerate their accounts of oriental attainments beyond the truth. The improvement of the Hindoos has, unqueſtionably, been much earlier than that of any nation in Europe; but it is equally certain that their attainments in almoſt all the arts are leſs conſiderable: They are now nearly in the ſame ſtate as they were two thouſand years ago†, when they were far ſurpaſſed in many particulars both by the Greeks and Romans.

They, as well as the Chineſe, have brought the more uſeful arts to a degree of perfection requiſite for the common purpoſes of life; but the efforts either

* Vid. Tranſlat. of the Hectopades, by Mr Wilkins, p. 332.
† Dr Robertſon's Diſquiſ. Appendix.

ther of curioſity, or of their genius, have never carried them beyond this point. The mediocrity of their ſkill in the arts neceſſary for defence, has been always conſpicuous; for they have been ſucceſſively conquered by the Perſians, the Patans, the Moguls, and modern nations of Europe. That very people whom European diſcipline has ſince rendered ſo formidable, had uniformly been accuſtomed to yield up their rich country an eaſy prey to every invader; and had, perhaps, ſeldom a dynaſty of princes from their own countrymen.

Herodotus is the earlieſt European hiſtorian who makes mention of this country; his work was compoſed 440 years before our æra. Even then, it had begun to experience the calamities of invaſion; for it was partly conquered by Darius Hyſtaſpes *. Alexander's expedition to the banks of the Indus, firſt communicated to Europeans authentic information concerning that part of India which has ſince obtained the name of the Panjab, or Five Rivers, the ſources of the Indus, down which part of the Grecian troops were conducted by Nearchus. Megaſthenes, the ambaſſador of Seleucus, during his long reſidence at Palibothra, tranſmitted farther information; of which Strabo, Pliny, and Arrian have availed themſelves in the accounts they have given of India. Its commerce, which at firſt centered in Tyre

* Herodot. lib. iv.

Tyre *, was afterwards transferred to Alexandria; when it was conducted by the Greeks, Romans, and Venetians, till the diſcovery of a paſſage to India by the Cape of Good Hope.

During all this period, containing two thouſand years, the Hindoo manners and cuſtoms have experienced very little change. Their knowledge, their manufactures, and arts; even their dreſs, and modes of living, are deſcribed as being exactly in the ſame ſtate they are at preſent. The following particulars, noticed by Arrian, will preſent to the mind of every perſon who has viſited India, a picture of their preſent cuſtoms and manners by no means inaccurate. "Their bodies are ſlender in form; their diet principally vegetables; they are divided into caſts, and ſubordinate claſſes; and the ſame trade is perpetuated in a family, from generation to generation. Marriages are permitted at ſeven years of age; but prohibited between different claſſes †. The men wear ear-rings; party-coloured ſhoes, and frequently veils, which cover the head and ſhoulders. The lower orders have their faces daubed with colours,

* Hiram, its king, was contemporary with Solomon; and the ſacred writers frequently mention the wealth of that city. Vid. Ezekiel's Proph.

† Not conſummated till the age of puberty; and in the inſtitutes of Menu, intermarriages of the different claſſes are recognized as valid, but ſtigmatized as *contra bonos mores*.

lours, while the higher ranks have umbrellas carried over them. Two-handed ſwords are carried about; with bows, whoſe ſtrings are drawn by the foot." Their ingenuity in catching elephants, and their method of manufacturing cotton, are all noticed in terms not inapplicable to their preſent ſtate *.

THIS ſingular ſtability diſplayed in the manners of Indians, muſt be imputed to their religion. The Braminical rites and inſtitutions enter into every part of their manners, and guide almoſt every action of their lives. Whatever theſe injoin, is therefore unalterable; for it is by them regarded not merely with that veneration which men pay to ancient cuſtoms, but as the injunctions of Heaven which it were impiety to violate. Hence the manners of the Hindoos have remained unaffected by thoſe invaſions and inſurrections which have ſo often changed the condition of ſociety in other countries. They have reſiſted equally the enthuſiaſm and cruelty of the Mahomedan, and the feebler efforts of European miſſionaries, for their converſion.

THOUGH this be the ſtate in which the Hindoos were found by the firſt Europeans who viſited their country, there is no reaſon to conclude, that prior to that period, they were not in a ſtate comparatively rude; and that they gradually emerged from that primeval

* Vid. Hiſt. Arrian. paſſim.

primeval barbarity in which nature has decreed to envelope the origin of nations. Hiſtory affords direct teſtimony of this fact. Thoſe writers already mentioned, notice that they were ruled by independent princes, whoſe territories, by the ſmallneſs of their extent, ſeemed to announce the limited progreſs they had made in ſocial union, and their humble attainments in the art of government. Their caves in Elephanta and Salſette, are ſtanding monuments of the original gloomy ſtate of their ſuperſtition, and the imperfection of their arts, particularly that of architecture, which is, perhaps, the moſt intricate and laborious of any.

The Hindoo attainments in the arts, however, ſuch as they are, have uniformly ſupplied the materials of a trade to the weſtern world, which has enriched every nation engaged in it. There a paſſion for Indian manufactures has actuated the higher ranks of ſociety in every age; and has conferred a degree of importance upon thoſe nations who have imported them, which they could not otherwiſe have attained.

The territories obtained by the Britiſh in this part of the world, though later in their acquiſition; in extent and importance far ſurpaſs what has ever fallen to the lot of any other nation. With a circumſcribed territory at home, they have reached a very high degree of eminence among the nations of Europe, while their dominion in Hindoſtan, and

their

their commercial intercourſe with the reſt of Aſia, confers upon them a greater influence on the happineſs of mankind, than the moſt extenſive empire of China can boaſt. Time alone can diſcover whether their connection with the Hindoos ſhall be more effectual in meliorating their condition, than that of the various nations who have reduced them under their ſubjection.

If this effect ſhall follow, ſo deeply intereſting to a large portion of our fellow creatures, it muſt be the reſult of an enlarged knowledge of their intereſts as connected with our own. The immenſe reſources of England, which, in all our wars, have aſtoniſhed the nations of Europe, are created and ſupplied by our commerce; and of this, the trade of India is the moſt conſiderable branch. The fate of the one country is involved in that of the other: with her poſſeſſions in Aſia Great Britain muſt ſtand or fall.

The inveſtigations of the Agricultural Board have already produced a maſs of uſeful information, poſſeſſed by no other nation in Europe. The views or claims of intereſt and of advantage, are equally ſtrong for a ſimilar ſtatiſtical account of India: ſhould that meaſure be carried into effect with equal ability, an obligation of the higheſt importance would be conferred by that inſtitution upon their country.

A ſet of printed queries ſent to every commercial reſident, factor, or other officer in each diſtrict, would,

would, in the courſe of a few years, determine how fully ſuch a meaſure was practicable. Diligent enquiry would ſoon aſcertain the moſt important articles of inveſtigation: ſuch as the number of the inhabitants; the particular manufactures, or labour, in which the people are employed in each diſtrict; the rate of their wages, and the expence of their living; the different branches of huſbandry, ſuch as the tenure by which the farmers hold their poſſeſſions; the rent, and different kinds of produce, with their value in the market.

Were all theſe particulars fully known, a thouſand means of at once improving the revenue and the condition of the people, would occur, which at preſent are either concealed, or left to vague conjecture. Pliny made the Romans acquainted, in ſome degree, with the ſtate of India, while they had no poſſeſſions there, and when that people could not affect the condition of the natives. The trade carried on with it ſeemed to him ſo immenſe, as to intereſt every member of the ſtate; yet the commerce of the Romans with India did not exceed fifty millions of ſeſterces * annually, or about one tenth part of that of Britain, excluſive of her immenſe territorial revenues †. The very diſtance of our poſſeſſions alone ſeems to require that ſome means ſhould be adopted

* The groſs revenue of Bengal and the upper provinces is ſtated at ſix millions, and four millions more may be regarded as the amount of the other provinces.

† 4,500,000l.

dopted of laying local knowledge before its legiſla-tors, and the executive government. No part of the Roman empire, large as it was, exceeded the diſtance of two thouſand miles from the capital *; a knowledge of its provinces could more eaſily be acquired and diſſeminated among the people, than in a ſtate, the greater part of whoſe dominions lie fifteen thouſand miles in a direct route from the ſeat of Government. If the following ſketches ſhall in any manner prove introductory to ſuch a work, by demonſtrating the practicability of the undertaking, the labour beſtowed in compiling them, will be amply rewarded; and their author will have the ſatisfaction of having neither lived nor written in vain.

He is fully ſenſible of the many imperfections with which his lucubrations muſt abound. The ſubject is too extenſive to be thoroughly inveſtigated by one perſon: neither his health nor his time permitted him to pay it all that attention which it juſtly merits. All, therefore, pretended by the following ſtrictures, is a ſhort view of the different ſubjects, which he holds out to be farther diſcuſſed, and finiſhed by other hands. He has the comfort to reflect, that no part is wilfully miſtated, nor any man's character wantonly attacked; and he will cheerfully correct unintended errors.

* Vide Rennel's Memoirs.

. . . . . .

Ganges, near Benares, Sept. 1797.

AMIDST all that boaſt of Aſiatic ſcience and literature; and thoſe lofty claims in favour of Braminical knowledge that have lately been advanced, there are perhaps no nations more ignorant of their own origin and hiſtory than the Hindoos and Chineſe. Although we have had acceſs to the Sanſcreet records at Benares, for ſeveral years, and ſome perſons are tranſlating them, no hiſtory of the country has been found which is the compoſition of a native. From the time of Alexander till the Mahomedan conqueſt, not even the materials of hiſtory have been produced from Hindoo records. Mahomed Feriſhta, a muſſelman, in the beginning of the ſeventeenth century, compiled a hiſtory of Hindoſtan from Perſian authors; a tranſlation of which, by Colonel Dow, has long been in poſſeſſion of the public.

THE

THE manners of a people are to be gathered from alluſions in their poetry; and this is perhaps the chief advantage that ſcience will derive from the ancient records of this country. The Mahabaret, which is now tranſlating *, is a very ancient hiſtorical poem, in which the truth of facts is probably ſtill more diſtorted by exaggeration, than, in Homer, you find the rape of Helen, and the ſiege of Troy. A flowery poet, or a ſtill more bombaſtic and looſe hiſtorian, ſeems to be the utmoſt that Aſiatic genius can produce: a vigorous intellect, matured judgment, and preciſion in ſtyle, are the growth of colder latitudes †.

ALL we learn, even from the Perſian Feriſhta, is that Hindoſtan was at firſt divided into a great number of ſeparate kingdoms; and afterwards ſo feebly united under the Mahomedan emperors, that they made but ſmall reſiſtance either to the firſt invaders of the country, or to its ſubſequent conquerors. Each province, attached to its viceroy, who was almoſt independent of the emperor, fell an eaſy prey to the incurſions of Tamerlane, Baber, Humaioon, and Nadir Shah. The Ayeen Acbery of Abul Fazel, is confined to a ſtatiſtical hiſtory of the empire of Delhi,

* By Mr Wilkins, a gentleman poſſeſſed of much knowledge of the languages of India, who has already publiſhed an epiſode of this work, entitled the Bhagrat Geeta.

† Vid. Major Rennel's Mem. p. 43.

Delhi, during the reign of Acber; upon the other kingdoms he ſeldom touches, and their internal tranſactions are involved in impenetrable obſcurity.

About the year 1000 of our æra, Mahomed penetrated into Hindoſtan; and after twelve ſucceſſive invaſions, in which he was more or leſs oppoſed by the native princes, he finally eſtabliſhed his empire. His vengeance and bigotry ſeemed more gratified by the maſſacres of the Hindoos, and the deſtruction of their temples, than his ambition was ſoothed by the acquiſition of new territory, or ſubjects. The murders he committed againſt the defenceleſs prieſts, and the numerous votaries of ſuperſtition who officiated at the temples, afforded this monſter the higheſt delight. "Nothing," ſays the judicious Major Rennel, "offends our feelings more, than the progreſs of deſtruction urged by religious zeal: as it allows men to ſuppoſe themſelves agents of the Divinity; thereby removing thoſe checks which interfere with the perpetration of ordinary villany, and thus makes conſcience a party when it was meant to be a judge *."

This picture, however ſhocking, is too exact a repreſentation of the conduct of moſt conquerors of Hindoſtan of the Mahomedan race. During eight dynaſties of kings, who reigned over this country for a

* Introduction to Mem. p. 46.

a period of 700 years, the moſt ferocious bigotry and rapine characteriſed their efforts in acquiring or recovering the different provinces of this peninſula; and had not the fervor of Mahomedan zeal ſomewhat abated towards the later period of their power, the whole ſcene of their conqueſts muſt have remained a ſolitary deſart. In 1265, within twenty-five miles of Delhi, the ſeat of government, an hundred thouſand of the Mewatti tribe were put to the ſword, as a puniſhment for their incurſions. The internal government of Hindoſtan muſt have been in a dreadful ſtate, when ſuch vindictive meaſures were purſued in the vicinity of the capital. Indeed, rebellious meaſures, and barbarous conqueſts, make up the hiſtory of this fine country, which nature ſeemed to have deſtined to be the paradiſe of the world.

Amidst theſe depredations, Benares, the great ſeat of Braminical learning, was plundered in 1184: and from this time the purity of the Sanſcreet language muſt have gradually decayed, till it at laſt ceaſed to be a living tongue, being nowhere ſpoken in Hindoſtan. It probably enters into the vernacular language, and makes a part of that mixture of which it is compoſed, as the Celtic, Saxon, and Latin do in the Engliſh. When conqueſts have been long maintained, and the conquerors numerous, ſimilar changes are produced in the language of every country. The Roman language, as well as the Sanſcreet, has ceaſed to be ſpoken in all the nations that were ſubject to that empire.

This

This city, which gives its name to a conſiderable province, is ſtill the great ſeat of learning, and is held in veneration all over India: Nothing, however, can more fully demonſtrate the circumſcribed ſtate of Aſiatic knowledge and learning, than the ſmall number who ſtudy the Sanſcreet language, and enable themſelves to read their ſacred or ſcientific books. Very few, even of the higheſt claſs of Brahmins have made this attainment—not the thouſandth part of the community; whereas in Europe, almoſt all the youth of any rank are inſtructed in the languages of Athens and of Rome from their earlieſt years; by their means a conſiderable maſs of knowledge reaches even the body of the people. But the incurſions of the Moguls were far oftener renewed; and were more awfully deſtructive than thoſe of the Goths and Vandals who overturned the Roman empire, and deſtroyed the monuments of taſte and ſcience that diſtinguiſhed Europe. Regular government was gradually eſtabliſhed, and learning revived with new luſtre in that quarter of the world; while Hindoſtan remains in the ſame gloom of ignorance as in the turbulent periods of the Mahomedan conqueſts.

In the courſe of a few years, it will be found that a proportionably greater number of Europeans will ſtudy the learned language of Hindoſtan, than of the natives themſelves. From the active curioſity and diligence of the former, much is to be expected; while

while little can be hoped from the ſupine indolence, and liſtleſs character of the latter.

About the beginning of the ſixteenth century, during the reign of Belloti, the Portugueſe reached India by the Cape of Good Hope. But ſo deeply was the empire involved in confuſion, that they were allowed to make conqueſts of ſome of the petty ſtates bordering on the coaſt, whoſe viceroys had become independent without even attracting the notice of the court of Delhi.

It was not till an hundred years after that period that the Britiſh were heard of there, when in 1615 Sir Thomas Row was ſent ambaſſador to the Emperor Jehanguire. During the lapſe of a century, the Portugueſe had made ſuch conſiderable acquiſitions on the coaſt, as to attract the notice of the court: and Ferishta, the hiſtorian, mentions, "that by the negligence of the king's governors ſeveral diſtricts of Guzarat were in the hands of the *Idolators of Europe* *."

About a century afterwards, the Mogul empire ſeemed to have reached the ſummit of its grandeur; from which it ſuddenly relapſed into debility and utter ruin. During the reign of Aurungzebe, who died in 1707, the empire extended almoſt over the whole

* Vid. Col. Dow's Hiſt. of Hindoſtan.

whole peninſula; and its annual revenue, where money is four times the value that it is in Europe, amounted to the ſum of 32,000,000l. ſterling, according to Major Rennel; but the Ayeen Acbery ſtates it at thirty-ſix millions in the time of Acber.

So vaſt an empire could not be held together by a weak and unenergetic government: and the mighty ſceptre of Aurungzebe, when graſped by the feebler hands of his ſons, was found too unwieldy for their management. His death was regarded as the ſignal of hoſtility by Mauzum and Azem, the two eldeſt, who marched, the former from Cabul, and the latter from the Deccan, to diſpute, in its center, the poſſeſſion of an empire too large for the management of one perſon. Two armies, each conſiſting of 300,000 men, decided the conteſt by a battle which coſt Azem his life; and conferred the whole empire on his more fortunate brother, who aſſumed the title of Bahadar Shah.

His four ſons diſputed the throne with the ſame violence that their father had done; till the power and reſources of the empire were ſo far reduced, as to enable the Sieks, an obſcure people from the caſtern mountains, to ſet up Ferokſere in the room of Jehander Shah, the laſt of them. So degraded was the houſe of Timor, that in the ſpace of eleven years after the death of Aurungzebe, as many princes had been raiſed to the throne, and ſucceſſively murdered

dered or depoſed. The royal authority thus proſtituted, became contemptible; and the governors of provinces prepared to throw off their dependence on the head of the empire who had become unable to overawe his ſervants.

THE Nizam, viceroy of the Decean, and Aliverdi Khan, Subah of Bengal, threw of the yoke; while the Mahrattas, and Rohillas eſtabliſhed independent ſtates in the heart of the empire. The province of Oude was ſeized by Siefdar Jung, grandfather to the preſent Nabob Azoph Doulah. Nothing now remained to the Imperial Houſe, except a ſmall territory round Delhi; when in 1749 the laſt royal army was defeated by the Rohillas, whoſe independence was now fully eſtabliſhed.

THE prince, in whoſe time this final overthrow of the Mogul power was effected, was Achmed Shah; from this period though the title be regularly aſſumed by the lineal heir of the empire, it is merely nominal. So powerful is the effect of cuſtom among Aſiatics, that the name and perſon of the emperor have been regarded as of conſequence to the different powers who have ſince contended for territory in Hindoſtan. The veneration of the people for their ancient monarchs has been ſo great, as to oblige the princes to obtain grants, ſanctioned by the emperor's name, to cover their uſurpations from the eyes of at leaſt the people throughout

India: and through that extenſive territory, which compoſed the Mogul Empire, the coin of each ſtate is univerſally ſtruck in the name of an Emperor, whoſe power they have long ceaſed to acknowledge.

REMARKS

REMARKS ON THE STATEMENT GIVEN BY THE ABBE RAYNAL OF THE BRITISH CONQUESTS IN BENGAL.

. . . . . .

Calcutta, March 1796.

THE celebrated battle of Plaſſey, which was gained by a ſmall army, conſiſting, it is ſaid, only of two thouſand natives, and nine hundred Europeans, gave the princes of India ſuch an awful impreſſion of Britiſh diſcipline and valour, that it has continued ever ſince to operate deciſively againſt them at every ſucceeding engagement.

THOSE who entertain doubts of the truth of Grecian hiſtories, and of the accounts of the Patan and Mogul conqueſts, from the enormous diſproportion of numbers, between the contending armies, may find a clear elucidation of them in many of the engagements in their own times, where the number of the victors was ſtill more diſproportioned to that of the vanquiſhed armies. A detachment of French troops

troops effected revolutions in the Deccan, while their number was, perhaps, not a tenth part of the number of Alexander. The Britiſh, in two campaigns, made a complete conqueſt of Bengal, Bahar, and Oude, with a ſtill more diminutive force. In all theſe inſtances, the firſt advantages were gained by Europeans alone, which were improved by levies in the conquered countries; and Alexander, who ſet out with only thirty-five thouſand, returned towards Europe with a hundred and twenty thouſand men.

After being thus firmly eſtabliſhed on the Ganges, the Britiſh power was engaged in conteſts in the Deccan, far more arduous in their nature, and for a while attended with leſs ſplendid advantages. There it had to contend with European armies, in a more difficult country, and with native troops whoſe tactics had been improved by ſuperior diſcipline: over theſe obſtacles too, however, it has finally been triumphant; and has annihilated the empire of the Myſorian kings, though defended ſucceſſively by Hyder Ally and Tippoo, two ſovereigns of greater military ſkill, and animated with a more inveterate hoſtility, than had ever diſputed the field againſt Europeans in the Eaſt.

The account given by the Abbé Raynal of theſe conqueſts, and ſettlements, is more ample and detailed, than that of any other writer. The changes introduced by time, have rendered his deſcriptions in

ſome

ſome parts, inapplicable to the preſent ſtate of the country: in other paſſages they were often originally inaccurate, from the impoſſibility of any ſingle perſon being able to collect ſo great a maſs of authentic particulars. What is ſtill more to be regretted, from his want of perſonal and local knowledge of the manners of the inhabitants, admittance has ſometimes been given to accounts altogether incredible by perſons who have viſited India.

THE eloquent exaggerations of this ingenious hiſtorian have univerſally been peruſed; always to the entertainment, and frequently to the inſtruction of his reader.

ONE manifeſt advantage he poſſeſſed over a native of Britain; he could deſcribe the conduct of its ſervants in India without fear or partiality. His reflections upon this topic are unbiaſſed, and may therefore be juſtly regarded as the moſt valuable part of his work; for this reaſon I have ventured to give his account of the manner in which we obtained the ſovereignty of Bengal, and of the rich province of Behar, from which I now write.

FROM an affectation, however, of impartiality, and of getting the better of European prejudices, the French writers repreſent the natives of every foreign country as being in a ſtate of comparative perfection and happineſs. In their religious and moral duties, they are always on the ſide of reaſon: and in every quarrel,

quarrel, or partial conteſt, they are ſure to be on the ſide of juſtice. Much of this affectation diſgraces the writings of Rouſſeau as well as of the Abbé Raynal.

"A pernicious cuſtom," ſays he, "had for ſome time prevailed in theſe countries: the governors of all the European ſettlements took upon them to grant an aſylum to ſuch of the natives as were afraid of oppreſſion or puniſhment. As they received very conſiderable ſums for their protection, they overlooked the danger to which the intereſts of their principals were expoſed by this proceeding. One of the chief officers of Bengal, appriſed of this reſource, took refuge among the Engliſh at Calcutta to avoid the puniſhment due to his treachery. He was taken under their protection. The Subah, juſtly irritated, put himſelf at the head of his army, attacked the place; and took it. He put the garriſon into a cloſe dungeon, where they were ſuffocated in the ſpace of twelve hours. Twenty-three only remained alive. Theſe wretched people offered large ſums to the keeper of their priſon to prevail upon him to get their deplorable ſituation repreſented to the prince. Their cries and lamentations were ſufficient information to the people, who were touched with compaſſion; but no one would venture to addreſs the deſpotic monarch upon the ſubject. The expiring Engliſh were told, that he was aſleep; there was not, perhaps, a ſingle perſon in Bengal who thought that the tyrant's ſlumbers ſhould be interrupted for one

one moment; even to preſerve the lives of one hundred and fifty unfortunate men!

"ADMIRAL Watſon, who was juſt arrived in India with his ſquadron, and Colonel Clive, who had diſtinguiſhed himſelf ſo remarkably in the war of the Carnatic, did not delay to avenge the cauſe of their country. They got together the Engliſh who had been diſperſed, and were flying from place to place: They went up the Ganges in the month of December 1756, retook Calcutta, and made themſelves maſters of ſeveral other places; and obtained a complete victory over the Subah.

"SUCH a rapid and extenſive ſucceſs, becomes in a manner inconceivable, when we conſider, that it was only with a body of five hundred men, that the Engliſh were to ſtand againſt the whole force of Bengal. But if their ſuperiority was partly owing to their better diſcipline, and to other evident advantages which Europeans have in battle over the Indian powers, the ambition of eaſtern chiefs, the avarice of their miniſters, and the nature of a government whoſe only ſprings are fear and preſent intereſt, were of ſtill more advantage to them: they had ſufficient experience to avail themſelves of theſe ſeveral circumſtances in their firſt, as well as in every ſucceeding enterprize. The Subah was deteſted by all his own people, as tyrants generally are; the principal officers ſold their intereſt to the Engliſh; he was betrayed at the head of his army, the greateſt part of which

which refuſed to engage; and he himſelf fell into the hands of the Engliſh, who cauſed him to be ſtrangled in priſon.

"THEY diſpoſed of the Subahſhip in favour of Jaffier Alli Khan, the ringleader of the conſpiracy; who ceded to the Company ſome provinces, with a grant of every privilege, exemption and favour, to which they could have any pretenſion. But ſoon growing weary of the yoke he had impoſed on himſelf, he was ſecretly looking out for means to get rid of it. His deſigns were diſcovered, and he was confined in the center of his own capital.

"COSSIM-ALLI Khan, his nephew, was proclaimed in his ſtead: he had purchaſed that uſurpation with an immenſe ſum of money; but he did not long enjoy it. Impatient of the yoke, as his predeceſſor had been, he gave ſome tokens of his diſpoſition, and refuſed to ſubmit to the laws which the Company had impoſed upon him. Upon this the war broke out again: The Jaffier Alli Khan, whom the Engliſh kept in confinement, was again proclaimed Subah of Bengal. They marched againſt Coſſim-Alli Khan. His General Officers were corrupted: he was betrayed, and entirely defeated: too happy, that whilſt he loſt his dignity, he ſtill poſſeſſed the vaſt treaſures he had amaſſed.

"NOTWITHSTANDING this revolution, Coſſim-Alli did not drop his hopes of vengeance. Full of reſent-

reſentment, and loaded with treaſure, he ſet out for the Nabob of Benares, chief vizier in the Mogul's empire. He and all the neighbouring princes reunited in oppoſition to the common enemy, who threatened them all equally. But now the conteſt remained no longer between them and a handful of Europeans juſt arrived from the coaſt of Coromandel; they were to engage with the whole ſtrength of Bengal, of which the Engliſh were maſters. Elated with their ſucceſſes, they did not wait to be attacked; they ſet out directly, and made head againſt ſo formidable league, marching with all the confidence Clive could inſpire, a leader whoſe name ſeemed to be the pledge of conqueſt. Clive, however, did not care to hazard any thing. Part of the campaign was ſpent in negociation; but in time the treaſures which the Engliſh had drawn from Bengal ſerved to enſure them new conqueſts. The heads of the Indian army were corrupted; and when the Nabob of Benares was deſirous of coming to action, he was obliged to fly with his men, without ever being able to engage. By this victory, the country of Benares fell into the hands of the Engliſh: and it ſeemed as if nothing could hinder them from annexing that ſovereignty to the province of Bengal."

By theſe or ſimilar methods, the Engliſh have obtained their territory in India; and other nations have acquired theirs by means perhaps ſtill leſs defencible. In the eye of reaſon, however, there appears but little ground for thoſe opprobrious terms

of abuſe with which this lively author has loaded their conduct. In fact, there cannot be adduced a ſingle argument againſt ſeizing the territory of the native princes, who were themſelves uſurpers, which may not be urged againſt interfering in any manner or trading with India in general.

WHEREVER mankind have tranſactions, there will ariſe quarrels and diſputes; and among nations who quarrel, the weaker party muſt ever ſuffer. In every quarter of the world, as well as Aſia, every nation, diſtinguiſhed among its neighbours by ſuperior bravery, knowledge, and induſtry, has invariably increaſed its power and enlarged its dominion. Superior talents operate upon the reſources of nations and their poſſeſſions in the ſame manner as they do in the caſe of individuals. Philoſophers may harrangue: but the induſtrious and enterpriſing always have, and in the nature of things ever muſt acquire an aſcendant over the diſſolute and poor.

SUCH is the unavoidable conſequence of the intercourſe of a warlike and enterpriſing people with nations inferior in arts and arms: If the ſubject be examined by the rules of morality, perhaps the conduct of Europeans may find a ſtill ſtronger vindication. According to the above account, the conduct of the native princes has been in the higheſt degree cruel and tyrannical. The Subah of Bengal, who murdered the Engliſh, was deteſted by all his ſubjects, and dreaded to ſuch a degree that he durſt not be approached

approached on the moſt urgent calls of humanity. The nobles who hated, betrayed him; and the picture is applicable to almoſt every native prince in India. The rules of morality, therefore, if applied to this ſubject, would impoſe it as a duty, on every nation who had the power, to vindicate the injuries of mankind, by depoſing them from their abuſed authority.

This relief to the ſufferings of mankind could not be viewed as an injury even to the princes themſelves; for they are in general uſurpers of their power. In Europe, where hereditary ſucceſſion is eſtabliſhed, the imagination conceives a ſort of right in the ſucceſſor to the proſpects which he has been educated to entertain; he compaſſes them without violence. In Aſia almoſt every ſucceſſion is an uſurpation. The deceaſed ſovereign bequeaths his people to an adopted heir; perhaps the child of his menial ſlave; and the diſcontented nobles take the field, and place upon the throne one of their own number, who has no other right than that conferred by the ſword. The Engliſh, on the contrary, have placed ſeveral of the princes whoſe territories they have acquired, in opulent and ſplendid circumſtances, of which hardly even their own folly can deprive them. And theſe rich penſioners they have continued from one generation to another, even in deſpite of their own demerits.

THE

THE late Nabob of Oude left his ample dominions to a child, born to his meaneſt ſervant, whoſe indifference for his people, and extravagance and folly can only be equalled by the meanneſs of his former condition. His dominions muſt therefore be governed as they too long have been, by a deſpotiſm and wantonneſs of cruelty more deſtructive than that of Nero. His territories border upon thoſe of the India Company; and their limits are every where diſcernible by the poverty and deſolation which they diſplay. The Engliſh nation has had a powerful aſcendancy over this country for nearly half a century: by them it has been conquered, as well as protected from foreign enemies; while its princes have preſerved their revenue without feeling dependence. A purer code of morality would have taught them, that to ſuffer crimes you can prevent, is to be acceſſary in committing them; that they are in ſome degree blameable for the wretched internal management of ſo vaſt a territory; that as it has been in their power, ſo it was their duty to make this prince a penſioner *, and his people happy. They have oftener incurred the guilt of hypocriſy, in the precautions they have adopted to ſcreen their uſurpations, than diſcovered temerity in ſeizing power which ſeemed thrown into their hands.

ORIGIN

* What right have we to do this? We have a right to reſume a gift upon the abuſing it; or, if improperly given, whether it has been abuſed or not.

ORIGIN AND PRESENT STATE OF THE MAHRATTA EMPIRE.

. . . . . .

Near Buxar, Nov. 1796.

IN every narrative of India affairs, the Mahrattas are mentioned as one of the moſt conſiderable powers which have ariſen on the ruins of the Mogul Empire.

THIS nation derives its name from Mahrat, a province in the Deccan *, which is, at preſent, under the name of Baglana, forms the moſt central part of the Mahratta dominions. Sevajee is regarded as the founder of this empire; he had obtained a diſtinguiſhed rank in the army of the King of Viſiapour, and the diſtractions of that monarchy ſoon afforded him an opportunity of aſſuming independent power. His

* Vid. Feriſhta's Hiſt. Hindoſtan.

His conqueſts were ſo rapid in the adjoining provinces, that before the acceſſion of Aurungzebe to the throne, he had already become formidable to the Mogul Empire. The Roman State had not a more hardy or warlike people for its founders than the Mahrattas; for many of the conqueſts of Sevajee were made in the face of Aurungzebe when he was at the ſummit of his power. The confuſions which followed upon the death of that Emperor, and the diſſentions among his ſons, allowed the Mahrattas to extend their conqueſts with a rapidity peculiar to this part of Aſia. Bred in the ſchool of war, and preſerved by their rugged and barren mountains from falling into that liſtleſs effeminacy which characterized the inhabitants of India, the Mahrattas were able to contend with Aurungzebe himſelf; and Sahojee, the prince who ſucceeded the founder of the nation, had before his death extended his dominions from the weſtern ſhore of the peninſula to Oriſſa on the eaſtern; and from Agra, on the north, to the Carnatic, on the ſouth; while almoſt every part of Hindoſtan and Bengal itſelf had been plundered by his armies. Theſe conqueſts were made in the ſame manner as thoſe of this nation have ever been: an enterpriſing chief, by holding up to his followers a proſpect of plunder, ſoon collects an army; and the weakneſs and diſtractions of his neighbours afford him an opportunity of realiſing his promiſes.

In 1718 the Mahrattas were ſo powerful, that they were enabled to enforce the payment of a tribute

bute from the Emperor Nadir Shah: this impoſition is in the language of Hindoſtan denominated a chout, and though it varied in particular diſtricts, amounted generally to one fourth of the annual revenue. This ſhameful contribution was exacted from the province of Bengal in 1742, when they overran that province with 80,000 cavalry, whoſe depredations and cruelties are ſtill remembered with horror by the natives. For two ſucceſſive years they plundered this rich territory, nor did they quit it till they exhauſted its ſtores, and carried off an immenſe booty, particularly from the Jaggut Seets, the moſt eminent bankers in India.

THE fortunes of an empire of ſuch recent formation and rapid growth, were deſtined ſoon to fall; for it contained the ſeeds of its own deſtruction. In fact, the combination of the Mahratta chiefs exhibits the feudal conſtitution in its looſeſt form. It is a voluntary combination of plunderers, poſſeſſing no principle of permanent union or improvement; and the riſe of the Mahratta power may with greater propriety be termed the diſſolution of all government, and the eſtabliſhment of anarchy, than the foundation of regular empire. They are the Swiſs of India, ever ready to enter for hire into every ſcheme of plunder ſuggeſted by an ambitious chief.

DURING the reign of Ram Raja, the diſcordant fabric of the Mahratta government, was divided by the two miniſters of that prince, who treated him with

with the ſame perfidy his anceſtor had done the king of Viſiapour. Bajirow, the Peſhwah, or miniſter, aſſumed the government of the weſtern provinces at Poonah; while the Bukſhi, or commander in chief, uſurped the eaſtern diſtricts, and eſtabliſhed his government at Nagpore, in Berar. Without any principle of mutual co-operation in making either peace or war, theſe chiefs continued at the head of their reſpective dominions.

Bajirow, the peſhwah of Poonah, conducted his adminiſtration with a vigour ſuited to the boldneſs with which he had uſurped his power. He not only took from the Portugueze the iſlands of Bombay and Salſette, but puſhed his conqueſts in the Panjab as far as the Indus. There, however, they gave umbrage to Abdalla, king of Candahar, a prince with whom they were hitherto unacquainted, and before whom their ſudden greatneſs ſeemed deſtined only to have made their downfall the more conſpicuous. For ſome time this aſpiring nation had been engaged in every ſcene of war and politics throughout the whole of Hindoſtan. This proſperity of their affairs, with the vaſt territories of which they were in poſſeſſion, inſpired them with the idea of baniſhing for ever the Mahomedan government from India. On their part, therefore, they collected all the Hindoo powers into a confederacy, while the Mahomedan princes ranged themſelves under the banners of Abdalla. Sujah Dowlah, and the Rohilla chiefs were his aſſociates, oppoſed to the Jatts and Mahrattas.

Shah

SHAH Allum was invited to the throne of Delhi by Abdalla; and the fate of the Mahomedan princes haſtened to its deciſion, which was effected by the celebrated battle of Panniput. Never ſince the fatal conteſt between the ſons of Allumguire, had Hindoſtan beheld ſuch numerous armies in the field, or a combat maintained with ſuch obſtinate valour. On the ſide of Abdalla and the Mahomedans there were 150,000 combatants; on that of the Mahrattas 200,000 men. The deeds of valour performed, and the carnage of both armies were incredible; but fortune declared in favour of Abdalla. The number of the Mahratta princes taken was immenſe, and the rout of their army ſo complete, that they have ever ſince laid aſide all thoughts of univerſal empire in Hindoſtan, and their power has continued to decline.

BALLAJEE, who ſuffered this ſignal defeat from the army of Abdalla, ſoon died, and was ſucceeded, in their turns, by Maderow, and his ſon Narrain; the latter being murdered by Ragoba, his uncle, left the Poonah government in a ſtate of great diſtraction. The widow of Narrain produced a ſon who was acknowledged heir; and the infamous Ragoba, depoſed by his ſubjects, unfortunately drew in the government of Bombay to eſpouſe his cauſe, by offering advantageous grants to the Company. The war that enſued terminated diſgracefully for both parties; for Ragoba was ſurrendered to his enemies, and the

Bombay army, after a convention by no means creditable to themſelves, agreed to that ſettlement.

THE adminiſtration of the Poonah * government, during a long minority, was conducted by a junto of chiefs whoſe jealouſies and quarrels have frequently brought the ſtate to the verge of civil war; a condition in which it cannot prove formidable to its neighbours.

IT is not probable Hindoſtan will ſoon ſuffer from the conqueſts of either of the Mahratta ſtates; the Eaſtern has no reſources, and the Weſtern muſt be feeble from diſſentions, till ſome chief of ſuperior talents unite it into one monarchy *. The meaſures lately purſued by Scindia, ſeemed to lead to independent power over the Poonah ſtate. His troops are diſciplined by Europeans, and a large body of them, till very lately, was commanded by an officer who had been in the Britiſh ſervice. If by their efforts Scindia, or his ſon Dowlat Row, eſtabliſhes a new empire in the north and weſt, the weſtern Mahratta government will be overthrown, and a power eſtabliſhed in the vicinity of Oude, more formidable to the Britiſh intereſts than any they have perhaps ever beheld in Hindoſtan †.

THE

* Purſeram Bow, one of the Mahratta chiefs, co-operated with our army in the late war.

† Vide Major Rennel's Mem. Introd.

THE provinces of Agra and Delhi, once ſo famous for their population and wealth, are at preſent in the moſt wretched ſtate. During half a century they have been the ſeat of uninterrupted devaſtation; the lands are nearly laid waſte, and the miſerable rayats dare not provide any thing beyond immediate ſubſiſtence, from too well founded an apprehenſion that they would draw upon themſelves the cruelties of ſome licentious chief whoſe trade is pillage, and whoſe ſupport is the ſpoils of his miſerable neighbours.

THIS deſcription is but too applicable to the whole Mahratta empire, which at preſent conſiſts of nearly one half of the whole peninſula of India: and which with the territory belonging to the Seiks, and the Engliſh, conſtitute the only independent power now remaining in this country.

THE Seiks, as well as the Mahrattas, are a recent power which has gradually riſen upon the downfall of the Mogul government. This nation conſiſts of a vaſt number of ariſtocratical chiefs equally looſe and diſorderly with the Mahrattas; their religious principles might form a bond of union in caſe of any general change threatening their ſect. They have in a great meaſure apoſtatiſed from the Hindoo ſyſtem, and have made great approaches to Deiſm, and a purer ſyſtem of natural religion. They receive proſelytes and make converts; and poſſeſs a decided advantage over the adherents of the ancient faith in pre-

precluding themſelves from no animal food except the Ox. They may be regarded as the reformed in India, and though the rules of their founder Nanuch have conſiderable hold over them, they would not perhaps prove ſo inacceſſible to the arguments of miſſionaries as the followers of Brahma. The extenſive country of the Panjeb, is wholly in their poſſeſſion, and forms a wide and untried field, which in ſome future period may ſignalize the labours of European miſſionaries.

OF

Calcutta, March 1796.

AMONG the firſt objects which attracts the notice of a ſtranger on his arrival in Bengal, is the elegance and beauty of Calcutta, the capital of our dominions in the Eaſt. The Company's botanic gardens, the elegant villas of its ſervants, the ſtrong and regular garriſon of Fort William, and the ſpires of the town, announce your approach to a capital, though not above fifty years ſtanding, that would be deemed conſiderable in any part of the world.

THE activity and enterprize of the Engliſh is perhaps no where better diſplayed, than in the rapid enlargement of this town. In the memory of perſons ſtill living here, the European houſes were mean, and comparatively few in number. Thoſe of the natives are, in general, ſtill paltry huts; but as proſpects

ſpects of gain, or at leaſt of employment, are always opening in the vicinity of European ſociety; the number of their dwellings has increaſed in a ſtill greater proportion than that of Europeans. From the number of houſes rated for the payment of taxes in the aſſeſſors books, the native inhabitants of Calcutta cannot fall much ſhort of half a million. They amount to this number eſtimating four perſons to each houſe; an eſtimate certainly moderate, if you conſider the number of children and women around each hut. The Hindoos not only all marry, but enter into that ſtate at a very early period of life, which renders their marriages uncommonly prolific: this circumſtance has rendered barrenneſs and celibacy diſgraceful in either ſex, but particularly in the female. A young woman, who has not been betrothed in her infancy; or who, from any ſiniſter accident, has not procured a huſband, brings much ſolicitude and diſgrace upon the family.

THIS natural ſource of population has always been ſeconded by the Britiſh government in Calcutta, which has afforded an uniform protection to the lives and property of the inhabitants. The police of the city is chiefly committed to a ſuperintendant of police, and ſeveral inferior juſtices of the peace, with certain ſtated ſalaries: before them all petty delinquencies are tried; and ſmaller diſturbances puniſhed. Tannahs, or guard-houſes, are erected in the different diviſions of the town: and the peace is maintained by a few companies of native ſoldiers who

who patrole the ſtreets, and prevent diſturbance from quarrels, robbery, or theft. Offences of a higher nature, whether committed by Europeans or natives, are cognizable by the ſupreme court of judicature; which about twenty-five years ago was ſubſtituted in place of the Mayor's court, with more extenſive juriſdiction, and ſuperior authority.

The powers of this court extend not only to the Company's territories in this part of India, but alſo to every caſe civil or criminal that may occur upon the ſea between the Coromandel and Malacca coaſts. The juriſdiction of this court does not extend to the upper ſtations: In theſe, however, all the European ſettlers come under an engagement to be amenable to its authority.

The policy of this eſtabliſhment has been much controverted by the civil and military ſervants on the Bengal eſtabliſhment; and it ſtill ſeems to be regarded as an unpopular meaſure. The objections, however, urged againſt it, as far as I have been able to weigh them, are highly to its honour, and that of its projectors. It is contended that a very conſiderable diſcretionary power over the natives, ought to be left in the hands of Europeans, to preſerve ſubordination and obedience. A greater degree of inſolence, and a more independent ſpirit, it is ſaid, is daily gaining ground among that claſs of men: that they are litigious to a proverb; and on every occaſion put themſelves on that footing of equality with Euro-

Europeans, which they find from experience to be countenanced by the ſupreme court. They foreſee in its continuance, and in the eſtabliſhment of ſimilar juriſdictions at Bombay and Madras, the total emancipation of the Britiſh ſubjects in India.

THESE charges, and theſe fears, proceed rather from the miſconduct of individuals than their patriotiſm; or the rigour of the ſupreme court. The diſſipation of Europeans here is far more conſpicuous than the inſolence of the natives. Both the military and civil ſervants are too often in the habit of incurring debt, ſometimes by borrowing money from the people of colour; but oftener by want of punctuality in the payment of wages and accounts. In every caſe a native is a rigid creditor; and is gratified, rather than hurt, by ſeeing himſelf in a ſituation in which he can command the perſonal liberty of an European by impriſonment. But the man who demands the payment of a juſt debt may be rigid, but is not inſolent. An honeſt man has nothing to fear from ſuch demands; to him they will always appear more reaſonable, than that every perſon who has the facility to part with his money, or want his wages, ſhould contribute to debauchery, or ſuffer for the extravagance and folly of another.

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* Since the above was written, a juriſdiction bill, conferring ſimilar powers to that for Calcutta, has been projected for the ſettlements of Bombay and Madras.

Formerly it ſometimes happened that a peace officer in the execution of his duty, has been ſeized in the cantonments, and inſulted in the execution of his duty, at the inſtigation of officers, or by their perſonal violence. Theſe facts are reported by themſelves with an air of exultation, which clearly demonſtrates their inclination, and a wiſh that they could again be repeated. Even at preſent, there are combinations well known to the bailiffs, which renders the execution of perſonal diligence a very dangerous part of their duty. But ſuch objections againſt the ſupreme court, are its higheſt panegyric; becauſe they are of the ſame nature with the objections which every thief or robber has to a gibbet.

The inſolence of the natives, and that independent ſpirit which endangers the Britiſh power in India, wiſe men have not been able to diſcover; or they have deemed paſt experience a better guide to its treatment, than the capricious exerciſe of diſcretionary power. The peculations of collectors, and the exactions of officers in detached commands, have produced the only ſerious diſcontents which the Britiſh government has ever yet experienced. And had the ſources of them, or the principal characters concerned, been more immediately under the eye of the ſupreme court, it is probable that they never would have exiſted.

Had the ſupreme court of Calcutta, or the general police of that capital been eſtabliſhed on bad prin-

ciples, their pernicious effects would have appeared long ſince, within the immediate ſphere of their operation. There, however, they are happily as inviſible as their ſuppoſed cauſe. Perhaps no city in Europe has increaſed more rapidly than Calcutta within the laſt thirty years. Ships belonging to every nation are ſeen in its harbour. Trade, and every mercantile ſpeculation, has been carried on with a boldneſs which appears never to have been checked by any judicial iniquity.

Greater property than is common in Britain, has been accumulated even by ſome of the natives, and poſſeſſed with equal ſecurity with that of the richeſt ſubjects in England. The ſafety with which the property of European families is entruſted to the native ſervants, is indeed highly to their honour. Fifty or ſixty, and more, perhaps, in ſome families, ſleep during the night in the compound, or in the paſſages and verandahs of the houſe, while every door is open: and you hear of much fewer burglaries and thefts, than are committed in London, after all that the precautions of bolts, watchmen, and conſtables have been able to effect. Were a houſe, with an equal number of ſervants, kept equally acceſſible in any town of England, it would in all probability be robbed as frequently as it contained any thing that could be carried away. And were theſe ſubjects poſſeſſed of the ſame degree of wealth as ſome natives in Calcutta, there is no country in Europe where they could be more ſecure. In ſome, it is not

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raſh to affirm, that they would have long ſince been convicted of inciviſm, or ſome imaginary crime, in order to conceal the real guilt—that of being rich.

THE Ayeen Acbery is entirely ſilent about Calcutta, which is full proof of its being wholly inconſiderable in the time of Acber. The ſettlement of a factory here was ſo late as 1690, by Job Charnock. It muſt have remained a trading factory till ſome time after the battle of Plaſſey in 1757. To have increaſed in forty years in ſo unhealthy a ſpot to its preſent population of five hundred thouſand ſouls, implies a degree of proſperity, amidſt all the irregularities of an infant ſettlement, that is unparalleled in any other quarter of the world.

DURING the rapid increaſe of this town, diſeaſes were fatal to thouſands, and particularly, according to the teſtimony of Dr Lind, among ſuch as had lately arrived from Europe. Hamilton gives of his own knowledge an inſtance of four hundred burials in ſix months, at a period when the whole Engliſh, reſident there, did not exceed twelve hundred. Wherever the Britiſh ſettle, the natives crowd around them for protection and employment: their experience has aſſured them of both; and by this they have been guided, in the midſt of loud clamours, from Europe, againſt the cruelty, oppreſſion, and rapacity of their rulers.

MARI-

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Calcutta, Dec. 1797.

THE merchants and agents of this capital are by no means confined to tranſactions with their conſtituents employed in different branches of the ſervice; they engage largely in foreign commerce to every part of note either in Aſia or Europe. In ſome houſes, the extent of their dealings has been eſtimated at two crores of rupees annually *: If upon ſuch an immenſe ſum they cleared only the common intereſt of the country, their gains muſt prove very ample. But this eſtimate of their groſs concerns is probably exaggerated; and the nature of the commodities renders mercantile enterpriſes much more hazardous than they are in Europe.

No

* Above two millions ſterling.

No mercantile houſe has accumulated ſums equal to thoſe fortunes acquired by many individuals in the ſervice. The charges of clerks, freight, inſurance, with the innumerable items of godown, and houſe rent, muſt deeply affect the profits ariſing from every concern not uncommonly lucrative.

The extent of the private trade of Calcutta cannot be eſtimated juſtly, either from the number or the burden of the ſhips belonging to that port. Till lately there were only ſixty that properly belonged to the Britiſh merchants here, and their burden was about twenty-ſeven thouſand tons. But it is well known that their concern in foreign ſhips is great: the Dutch, Daniſh, and French ſettlements in the river afford an opportunity for indirect trade to any extent, of which it is believed they fully avail themſelves.

The Hon. Company affords conſiderable employment to the country-built ſhips, independent of the merchants. It poſſeſſes a marine eſtabliſhment, under the direction of a Board conſtituted for that purpoſe. During war, cruizers againſt the enemy are frequently employed; as well as tranſports, and ſtore-ſhips for its own troops.

These tranſactions fall under the immediate direction of the Marine Board, conſiſting of five members, a number of ſubordinate officers, and clerks. It ſuperintends alſo the pilot ſervice, a moſt important

portant branch of the marine eſtabliſhment in a river of ſuch dangerous navigation as the Hoogly. The great quantity of ſand and mud that is waſhed down this branch of the Ganges during the rains, occaſions a continual fluctuation in the ſize and poſition of the ſand banks, by which its opening is infeſted. Conſtant attention to this circumſtance is indiſpenſable, in order to place the different buoys ſo as they ſhall not miſlead the mariner.

FROM the periſhable and expenſive nature of ſhipping in this climate, freight muſt be high: but a circumſtance which muſt be borne by all, ſeems but ſlightly to affect any: and commerce appears as adventurous here, as in any part of the world.

THE freight of boats in the inland trade upon the river, is far from being low; owing to the length of time neceſſary to perform a moderate voyage upon that winding ſtream. The larger boats upon the Ganges carry from three hundred to ſix hundred mauns; and their hire per month, amounts to twenty, thirty, or ſixty rupees, according to their different ſizes

BUDGEROWS, for the accommodation of gentlemen, and their families, are to be had of all ſizes from eight to twenty-four oars; the rate of hire for the firſt, is ſixty rupees per month; for the largeſt, two hundred and thirty. This ſum includes the pay of the boatmen; a claſs of men the moſt uſeful, laborious,

berious, and contented in Bengal. The pinnace is another deſcription of travelling boat, ſtill more expenſive than the budgerrow. It has ſuperior accommodation, and from its reſembling the ſtructure of European craft, both in the hull and rigging, it is better fitted for encountering a gale in the great river.

Besides the high rate of freight charged on the inland, and maritime trade, the merchants in Calcutta pay a conſiderable commiſſion on the purchaſe of goods by their agents: this upon moſt articles is five per cent.; but as they are more frequently purchaſers for others than themſelves, this ſum will be oftener received than paid.

The maſters of the country-built ſhips, or the ſupercargoes, are the immediate agents by which the trade of this part of the world is conducted. They are the moſt enterpriſing body of men; and in general better informed than thoſe of the ſame profeſſion in Europe. Many of them have made independent fortunes; and what is ſtill more to their praiſe, enjoy them in a decent and creditable manner. The faſtidious ideas regarding rank, which formerly prevailed in this capital, went nearly to the exclusion of this uſeful claſs of men from the ſociety of our imaginary grandees; a loſs more than compenſated by their diligent attention to their own concerns; which has raiſed many of theſe men to ſta-

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tions in Britain which few of their contemners have been able to attain.

WITH the common Malays, and a mixture of Chineſe, and Bengalee ſeamen, who never become very expert and intelligent in their profeſſion, it is aſtoniſhing with what ſecurity the country ſhip-maſters perform voyages in theſe dangerous ſeas. Theſe veſſels are termed Donies; their enterpriſes at ſea are chiefly to be aſcribed to the example of Europeans: before their appearance the Hindoos were hardly known as navigators. There are ſix different aſſurance companies in Calcutta; who cover the property of individuals from the riſks of the ſea, perhaps at as low a rate of inſurance as it can be done in Europe.

THE ſtate of navigation, as practiſed by the natives, like moſt of their other arts, is far from being in a perfect ſtate. The mariners compaſs, the greateſt improvement in the ſcience, was, and ſtill remains in a very imperfect ſtate over every part of India. Their aſtronomical inſtruments are, as far as the practice of ſailors is concerned, in a ſtate equally contemptible. In a European ſhip you may ſometimes meet with their barks at ſea in the utmoſt uncertainty of both latitude and longitude. Their inſtruments are ſuppoſed, by ſome very competent judges, to be borrowed from thoſe of Europeans, and

and are certainly but awkward imitations of their originals *.

Of the ſhips which I have mentioned belonging to the port of Calcutta, there is not a ſingle one commanded by a native. Some low perſon of European extract, but removed perhaps by many generations, is frequently preferred to the command even of thoſe paltry ſhips which venture into the open ſea. Of a maritime force hardly any nation in the Eaſt has formed any idea. There are, indeed, ſome proahs and private ſhips fitted out for piracy, who fight, and maſſacre the unarmed crews of merchantmen with all the inveteracy and cruelty of ſavages. Theſe enterpriſes, ſuch as they are, conſtitute nearly the whole of Oriental attainments in naval war.

The internal navigation is conducted by the natives to a greater extent, and with a greater degree of ſucceſs. The different ſtreams of the Ganges interſect the country in a manner ſo obviouſly convenient for tranſporting commodities, that it is probable that the Hindoos have carried on this navigation from the earlieſt period of their civilization. I will therefore give a ſhort ſketch of this noble river as an inſtrument of internal commerce.

The ſource of the Ganges long remained in as much uncertainty as that of the Nile. It was left to

* Vide Aſiatic Reſearches.

the preſent age to make the diſcovery; when the Chineſe Emperor Camhi ſent perſons to explore it, though at the diſtance of 2,500 miles from his capital. It iſſues from the oppoſite ridge of the ſame mountains with the Barrampooter, and directs its courſe in a contrary progreſs, till the diſtance of 1200 miles intervenes between rivers that are again to approach and water the ſame plain.

So completely are the various branches of theſe rivers diffuſed over the flat country, that there is hardly any part of the large province of Bengal above twenty-five miles diſtant from a navigable river. The wood, ſalt, and proviſions of many millions of people are conveyed along theſe channels by 30,000 boatmen, the moſt laborious and hardy race in India. All theſe are independent of the tranſport of the mercantile commodities to be ſhipped for Europe, which may amount to two millions annually.

The Barrampooter, though larger than the Ganges, affords leſs aſſiſtance to commerce; for it travels eaſt through rugged defiles and vallies, ſeldom approaching the habitations of man. In a military view, the Ganges is equally commodious as in that in which we have conſidered it. A communication is afforded by it between the different ſtations for the conveyance of troops and warlike ſtores. Thus it ſuperſedes the neceſſity of forming magazines, and is more commodious than the military roads of the Ro-

Romans, or the carrying places of North America, which not only obſtruct the progreſs of an army, but enable the enemy to determine the place and mode of attack. Major Rennel, from whom theſe particulars are ſelected, aſſerts that the Ganges, though inferior in the length of its courſe, diſcharges a greater quantity of water into the ocean, than any river in the world, from the influx of the immenſe tributary ſtreams which it receives, and from its poſition within the reach of the periodical rains. Yet the trade carried on in this mighty ſtream, though it paſſes through the fineſt country perhaps in the world, appears but trifling when compared to that of China. The Embaſſy found 100,000 marines on a ſingle branch of the river Peiho only *, whereas 30,000 are ſtated as the whole amount of Dandies who ply upon the Ganges, according to Major Rennel. According to the Ayeen, the contribution to government muſt have exceeded this number, ſince he declares that four thouſand boats were furniſhed by Bengal alone, and ten dandies to each boat is no extragavant allowance.

THE

* Sir George Staunton's Embaſſy.

THE DIFFERENT RACES OF INHABITANTS SETTLED IN CALCUTTA.

Calcutta, March 1797.

THE group of inhabitants that meets your eye in paſſing along the ſtreets of Calcutta, is a multifarious mixture of adventurers of every complexion, and from almoſt every nation in the world. Even the mercantile part of the community conſiſts of individuals from almoſt all the countries of Europe and Aſia.

THE Armenians are the moſt reſpectable, and perhaps the moſt numerous body of foreign merchants in this capital. They carry on an extenſive trade from China, and moſt of the ſea-ports to the eaſtward, and to the weſt, as far as the Perſian Gulph. Their information from all theſe different quarters, is deemed the moſt accurate and minute of any body of men in their profeſſion. They are attentive, regular,

gular, and diligent in buſineſs; and never think of departing from their line, and indulging in diſſipation, even after a competency has been acquired. Their houſes are, therefore, of old ſtanding, and many of them are poſſeſſed of large capitals. As ſubjects they are perhaps the moſt peaceable and loyal to be found in any country: as members of ſociety they are polite and inoffenſive.

When the convaleſcence of his Majeſty, after a ſevere indiſpoſition, was publicly notified in Calcutta, a general expreſſion of joy was made by all the inhabitants. But the moſt conſpicuous and brilliant illuminations were diſplayed by an Armenian merchant: becauſe accompanied by an act of charity.

His loyalty did not eſcape the notice of Lord Cornwallis, who on interrogating him what particular intereſt *he felt* in the life of his Britannic Majeſty, received this reply; "I have, my Lord, lived under his government for near thirty years; it has never injured me; but on the contrary always afforded its protection: and this, with induſtry on my part, has enabled me to accumulate a very plentiful fortune." This ſpeech is not, perhaps, the moſt eloquent; but, I confeſs, that to me it has conveyed a more advantageous idea of his underſtanding, than if he had compoſed volumes of our political ſophiſtry.

When theſe circumſtances were reported to his Majeſty by the Governor-General, the Armenian

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was preſented with the miniature of his Sovereign, which he continued to wear till his death; and his ſon now wears it in honour of his family.

Some of the more reſpectable Armenians are commonly invited to the public balls and entertainments given in Calcutta: where they invariably behave with all that decorum and correctneſs which a knowledge of mankind generally produces. A few prieſts of their perſuaſion, are maintained by them, not only in affluence, but in ſome degree of ſplendor. In their fondneſs for ſhow and elegance, the Armenians approach nearer the Engliſh than any merchants here: they are, however, more guarded in their expence; for they are ſeldom ſeen diſplaying their equipage till they are fully able to defray its charge.

The Mogul merchants are the next body of ſtrangers, if they ſtill merit that title after ſo long a reſidence in this country. They have thirteen different mercantile houſes of conſiderable note, beſides many other counting houſes of inferior importance. Some individuals among the Moguls are very wealthy; and are only inferior in riches to ſome of the native Rajahs, Banians, and Shroffs: ſome of theſe are more opulent than the firſt noblemen in England. A million ſterling, or even half of that ſum *, which ſeveral

* Among others are Dadee Naſſir Wangee, Ramdoſs, and Rajah Nopkiſſen. Mr John Briſtow, a civil ſervant of the Com-

ſeveral are ſaid to poſſeſs, yields a revenue of three times the annual amount of any capital in Britain, from the exorbitant rate of intereſt at which theſe people lend their money.

A Hindoo, of whatever fortune, ſtill retains his narrow ideas, and parſimonious habits. His pious contributions, and the expences of his Zenana, are the greateſt drains upon his income; in his dreſs and table there is little devoted either to the purpoſes of elegance or magnificence. The notches, marriages, and religious feſtivals, ſeem to be exceptions from this remark; but theſe ceremonies are under the direction of the Brahmins; and according to the ideas which theſe ſpiritual guides have formed of his wealth, muſt the otter, roſe water, and other perfumes, and ſweetmeats be, ſerved in veſſels of gold, under a large canopy illuminated with beautiful luſtres, to many hundreds of gueſts of all ranks and denominations. The Hindoo on ſuch occaſions, is gratified with the appearance of a large company; and deems himſelf particularly honoured by the attendance of Europeans.

THOUGH the Notches are intended to do honour to ſome deity, who preſides over the feſtival; yet they ſeem of all inſtitutions the leaſt calculated to excite

Company, is the richeſt ſubject in his Majeſty's dominions; his income is above 200,000l. ſterling per annum.

excite religious ideas. Part of the ceremony conſiſts in liſtening to the muſic of the ſinging girls, who drawl out their monotonous ditties with a nonchalance and dullneſs, which can only be equalled by the ſluggiſh dance, and inanimate geſtures with which they are accompanied. Of all entertainments, an Hindoſtance Notch is probably the moſt inſipid: they are ſometimes accompanied with pantomimical performances of no delicate nature. Yet as ſuch invitations are given from politeneſs, it is proper that they ſhould be accepted, with at leaſt an appearance of ſatisfaction.

THE number of Greek merchants in Calcutta is not conſiderable. They however maintain one clergyman, who performs religious worſhip according to the rites of that church. He is a very agreeable and well informed man; a native of one of the iſlands in the Levant.

PORTUGUEZE houſes of agency are, in point of number, next to thoſe of the Engliſh. A very conſiderable number of the deſcendants of that nation, by native women, reſide in Calcutta. No people in Europe ſeem to have aſſimilated ſo cloſely to the manners of the country. In reſpectability of character, ſome of the lower ranks are little ſuperior to themſelves; they ſeem to have retained with more ſteadineſs the vices than the virtues of either line of their anceſtors. By many they are deemed the moſt deſpicable claſs in India; with every vice of the nation

tion they poſſeſs few of their virtues. With a complexion darker than that of the Hindoos, with habits ſo ſimilar, and with full poſſeſſion of the language, it is ſtrange that none even of theſe have been able to make a convert from the Heathen to the Roman Catholic faith. Nothing can more clearly demonſtrate the compleat dominion which the Brahmin ſuperſtition poſſeſſes over the minds of the common people: for there is no denomination of Chriſtians more devoted to the work of converſion than the church of Rome.

THE Britiſh merchants in Calcutta are a numerous and reſpectable order of men. In this place ſeveral of them have acquired large fortunes, in the acquiſition of which they have diſplayed thoſe mercantile talents, and that enterpriſing ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes their character in every part of the world. In Calcutta the peculiar habits of their profeſſion have in no degree encroached on the liberality of their minds, or the elegance of their equipage and tables. They here diſplay an expence and ſplendor in their manner of living ſeldom aſpired after by the ſame order of men in any part of the world: and what is greatly to their honour, their acts of charity and munificence to indigent perſons have, perhaps, never been equalled by any ſimilar number of men of any rank whatever.

FEW of theſe gentlemen are engaged in the ſervice, a circumſtance here of more conſequence than

may be apprehended. The ſervice of the Company has certain ideas of rank and conſequence attached to it, which often produces ludicrous effects upon the intercourſe of ſociety. All perſons in civil and military appointments affect a degree of ſuperiority over ſuch as are not in the ſervice, which is frequently ill ſupported, either by their talents, birth, or character.

At the public entertainments, rank was formerly a matter of much greater concern at Calcutta than at St. James's. Here all are graſping at rank and ſuperiority, with an eagerneſs proportioned to the conſcious want of it, and to the obſcurity of their former condition. This has brought to the ſubject ſo great an intereſt, and ſo much perplexity, that even the ingenuity of the ladies, who are commonly moſt deeply verſant in this ſcience, is often unable to unravel it. To hand a lady to table, or to her carriage, is an affair which requires deep cogitation: if it be aſpired to by a gentleman whoſe rank is unequal to the office, inſtead of paying a compliment, he is guilty of rudeneſs, and commits an unpardonable offence. When the ladies take the floor to dance, the moſt perfect acquaintance with all that has ever been written upon heraldry, would not enable you to make a ſatisfactory arrangement either of the ladies themſelves or of their partners. Hardly a meeting, formerly, concluded without laying the foundation of turmoils and grievances, more laſting and more

more important than the magnitude of their cauſe, in your eyes, will juſtify.

WHERE all are nearly equal in obſcurity, and equally deſtitute of claim to rank, the arrogance and vanity of individuals has no defined limits to its exactions. Where all purſue the ſame object by the ſame path, there muſt be frequent joſtlings and colliſions of intereſt or opinion.

HAPPILY the good ſenſe of the preſent generation is gradually eradicating thoſe ſeeds of diſcord; which could never have been ſown but by perſons of little underſtanding, and limited acquaintance with the world.

OF

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Calcutta, March 1799.

AMONG the various claſſes of the mercantile part of the community, formerly noticed, no mention is made of the Jews. Few of that nation ever ſettle in India; and Calcutta is perhaps the only opulent town that is free of them.

THE character of the native merchants is ſo completely Jewiſh, that were the moſt expert of the Iſraelites to deal with them, it is more than probable that he would be defeated at his own weapons.

THE native Bannians, Sarkars, and writers, carry on the greateſt part of the retail trade of Calcutta. They go around hawking commodities, from morning to night; or ſearching after cheap purchaſes. Nothing can exceed their eagerneſs for money; and

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if you are not in ſome meaſure a judge of the article you are to purchaſe, you will infallibly be over-reached. Indeed, that low cunning, ſtratagem, and deceit, which characterizes the money tranſactions of perſons of narrow intellects, applies almoſt without exception to this claſs of the Hindoos. For once that an European over-reaches them, he is cheated a thouſand times. Whether you employ a *Conſumah* or Sarkar, to tranſact buſineſs, you muſt lay your account with impoſition; for although he may boaſt of belonging to the higheſt caſt of his country, half a rupee will unfortunately often prove greater than the price of his honeſty. To over-reach in a bargain inſers no diſcredit among theſe men: ſuch as are noted for it obtain the appellation of pucka adme, men of ſtrong parts.

It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that whatever money or goods you intruſt to the care of a native ſervant, will in general be faithfully accounted for. It is in making a bargain with you, or purchaſing goods, in your abſence, on your own account, that you are ſo frequently betrayed. The ideas I had formed of the innocence and ſimplicity of the natives, and of the frauds, peculations, and oppreſſions which they ſuffered from the Britiſh I have often had occaſion to correct; as they bore but little reſemblance to matter of fact.

With all their propenſity to cheat, the native ſhop-keepers generally ſell their goods on lower terms than

than you meet with in the European ware-rooms. They are commonly neither of the firſt faſhion, nor quality; and they are purchaſed at Vendue, where they are often procured on very moderate terms.

THEIR houſe rent is another cauſe of their underſelling Europeans. The ſhops of the natives, though better than their houſes, are mean and diſagreeable; and from their ſituation in the common bazars, are infinitely cheaper than the larger and ſplendid rooms in which the Britiſh merchants expoſe their wares.

HOUSE rent, and ſervants wages, are the moſt expenſive parts of the charges of houſe-keeping in Calcutta. The common articles of proviſion are much cheaper than in Europe; but houſe rent, till lately, has been a very exorbitant charge. Only a few years ago, a houſe ſufficient to accommodate a genteel family, could not be procured under ſix or eight hundred pounds a year; many were let at a larger ſum. The extent and number of buildings occupied by many of the merchants in Calcutta muſt prove a conſiderable item in their expence.

THE number of ſervants neceſſary in a private family exceeds all moderation, and I am afraid the belief of an Engliſhman, who has not viſited this country. For ſome time after my arrival, I lived in a private family, where the ſervants of all deſcriptions amounted to an hundred and five. What is more remarkable, they were to a man all neceſſary. This

ſurely

ſurely is no ſmall inconvenience to Europeans; but it is an evil for which there is no remedy as long as the ſuperſtition of the natives ſhall deter them from performing ſervice beyond one ſpecific kind of work. The wages varies according to the different ſtations they occupy; from four rupees per month, to twenty. The average paid to each man in the family, juſt mentioned, cannot be leſs than ſix rupees, which amounts to near ſeven hundred a year.

THIS added to the houſe rent, and the incidental charges of a family, will raiſe its expenditure to three, four, and five thouſand rupees a year, according to its number. Nor is this expence to be aſcribed to the extravagant ideas imbibed in this country, or to the gratification of vanity, a plant of rank growth in Bengal; but is abſolutely incurred by many ſober families, who have remained untainted by any of the burdenſome and coſtly follies of faſhionable life.

WHERE theſe are followed, they conſtitute, in this warm climate, the moſt laborious of all purſuits; and cannot be indulged without an expence, double, perhaps treble the amount above ſtated.

THE extravagant rate of houſe rent ſuggeſted a ſpeculation which has, perhaps, as far as poſſible reduced that charge. Purchaſing ground, and houſe-building became for a while a favourite ſcheme of proprietors in Calcutta; but while the number of Europeans remains comparatively few, this ſpecula-

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tion may eaſily be carried too far. The number of houſes is at preſent fully adequate to the accommodation of the people; yet building goes forward with a rapidity which muſt ſoon prove its own check.

BRICKS, mortar, and wood, are by no means ſcarce in Bengal; yet the money ſunk in building a houſe, is always great in proportion to its ſize and accommodation. The number of natives employed, and the ſlowneſs of their operations, is neceſſarily attended with this conſequence. Beſides, houſes in India are always a periſhable commodity, and in conſtant need of repairs. This may partly be owing to the heavy rains, and ſtorms of wind; but it is chiefly to be aſcribed to the deſtructive intruſions of the white ants *. Theſe animals make their way in great numbers into every place where there is moiſture, and form habitations in the heart of the hardeſt beams and planks. So deſtructive are they in their operations, that every beam in a houſe may be completely deſtroyed, while outwardly it may appear perfectly ſound.

FROM theſe circumſtances, and the great intereſt of money, the rent of a houſe muſt in Bengal bear double the proportion to the capital ſunk in building it, that is requiſite in Europe, to render houſe-building

* Termes *fatale*.

ing a profitable ſpeculation. Hence rent in Calcutta ſtill continues high, and will probably remain ſo.

ONE comfortable circumſtance in the ſtructure of the houſes of Europeans, is their exemption from the accident of fire. Only a ſmall portion of wood enters into the materials; for the partition walls, as well as the flat roofs are chiefly conſtructed of brick and mortar. This laſt article, under the denomination of *Chunam*, the natives have brought to great perfection.

AMIDST that ſecurity from fire, enjoyed by European families, the native inhabitants are ſubject to dreadful alarms and danger from that element. The great bulk of their huts are conſtructed of a kind of baſket work, made of ſplit bamboos or reeds. This ſlender and combuſtible fabric, the Hindoo neatly covers in a light thatched roof; and in this humble tenement, he, his wife, and numerous children reſide, with a degree of cleanlineſs and comfort, which would gratify your humanity, as completely as it mocks the toils of the ambitious.

THESE manſions of contentment are regularly threatened, or deſtroyed by fire every dry ſeaſon. On travelling through the town you may ſometimes ſee whole ſtreets ſmoking in aſhes, and thouſands of inhabitants buſy in carrying off their little moveable property. You are not, however, to ſuppoſe that this ſcene proves equally calamitous as ſimilar ones

in Europe. Here property is ſmall, and in general eaſily ſecured: the habitations are ſlender, and therefore eaſily rebuilt. For one or two rupees, the Hindoo is reinſtated in a dwelling with equal comfort after, as before an accident, which generally reduces an European family to beggary during the reſt of their days. The inconvenience of ſleeping in the open air for a few nights, from choice or neceſſity, has to the Hindoo become ſo familiar, that it finds no place in the liſt of his misfortunes. Thus does the ſtream of human happineſs diffuſe itſelf in a more equable tenor than we often imagine: and the poet's obſervation is as completely verified in its figurative and moral, as it is in its natural application;

Celsi graviori caſu,
Decidunt turres,

The great are expoſed to many real, and more imaginary evils; the wealthy offer a broad mark to adverſity; while many of the rudeſt ſtrokes of fortune either reach not the humble dwellings of the poor, or make on them but a ſlight and temporary impreſſion.

In proof of what is here aſſerted, I have obſerved in the provinces of Oude, ſeveral hundred cottages demoliſhed by the ſwelling of the Ganges and Jumna, and, though on the ſpot, never heard a complaint; nor indeed beheld a ſcene of real miſery. In the beginning of September 1798, the Ganges broke

broke over its bank, and deſtroyed ſeveral hundreds of mud-houſes. This unavoidably happens as often as even ſtagnated water reaches the walls, as from the nature of this ſubſtance they crumble down, and the roof falls in. The inhabitants remain ſo long as with ſafety they dare, and when that cannot longer be done, they reſort to the neareſt height and conſtruct a temporary ſhed of the old roof and materials of their former dwelling.

I have ſeen them ſitting ſmoking their hookers, in a houſe three feet covered with water; the firewood of the family was piled up on the floor, and upon the top of it the members ſat without any viſible ſuffering or concern. The River is a munificent god; they repoſe in its mercy;—poſſibly their faith and piety would be gratified by being carried down in its ſtream.

Calcutta, Jan. 1797.

THE maintenance and education of the children belonging to Europeans in India, have on account of their increaſing number, become objects of great importance. Nearly half a century has already elapſed ſince the power of the Britiſh arms has been eſtabliſhed in Bengal; and the influx of European inhabitants has ever ſince kept pace with the increaſe of power, and the proſpect of acquiring wealth. In the ſervice of the Company, and in the proſecution of private adventures, opportunity has been offered to many of accumulating fortunes; but the country has been the grave of many more.

EUROPEANS in India, whether they live to become rich, or die poor, from their own diſſolute habits, and the unhappy frailty of the Mahommedan women, gene-

generally leave a numerous progeny behind them. In every caſe where the parent is poor, the maintenance of his children becomes, whether they live or die, a public charge upon the community.

Did not the exerciſe of their benevolence in ſome meaſure cover a multitude of faults, the Europeans of India muſt have long ſince been condemned to behold ſcenes of the utmoſt diſtreſs in the ſituation of orphans, and the children of the poor; precluded from any rank and employment in European ſociety, and abandoned by the natives, they ſeemed to be the moſt deſtitute of all beings.

In this light they were viewed by ſeveral perſons, who have done honour to themſelves and their country, by eſtabliſhing ſchools for the maintenance and education of the orphan children of the military ſervants of the Company. Two inſtitutions have been formed for this purpoſe; one for the children of officers, and the other for thoſe of private ſoldiers. Each is provided with teachers of both ſexes; qualified to inſtruct the children in ſuch branches of knowledge and induſtry, as ſeem fitted for their rank and proſpects in ſociety. The fund for the ſupport of theſe inſtitutions, is ſupplied by a fixed contribution raiſed from the military, and by the donations of ſuch perſons as wiſh to forward the aims of benevolence.

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The children of ſuch as have died, or of ſuch as are evidently poor, are only admitted gratuitouſly into this ſchool; but any officer may, for a reaſonable ſum, have his children educated there: and it is the moſt eligible place in India; for during a period of twenty years, the management and ſuperintendance of this ſeminary of education have been as faithful and as diligent as its inſtitution was benevolent. About ſix or ſeven hundred children are maintained and educated by this uſeful charity. The only thing wanting to complete its purpoſe ſeems to be ſuitable employment for the youth of both ſexes, after they have finiſhed their education. There has not hitherto been in India any middle claſs of ſociety, between the Europeans and natives, and of conſequence few employments open for them to occupy.

This want of employment for country-born children has already been ſeverely felt; and is every day becoming more urgent from the increaſe of their number. Beſides the two inſtitutions already mentioned, there are ſeven or eight others for the education of boys; and nearly an equal number for girls. If, in the orphan ſchools, all the intereſt of the heads of the army and of the managers, is unable to procure employment for the youth educated there, the difficulty is much greater in private ſeminaries, where this can only devolve upon individuals. For the ſettlement of their pupils in uſeful profeſſions, neither parents nor maſters have yet been able to deviſe any adequate means.

Ac-

ACCORDINGLY almoſt all the ſchools in Calcutta for either ſex, are continuing to increaſe in the number of pupils, and in the difficulty of providing for them. This difficulty is increaſed by the manner in which female education is conducted in Calcutta. From a partiality as unaccountable as it is ill founded, the girls are ſplendidly educated in boarding-ing ſchools, where they are taught to dance with eaſe, and to dreſs with ſome degree of elegance, but much more affectation. Theſe accompliſhments, ſuperficial as they are, contain nearly the whole amount of their attainments at the boarding-ſchool.

ON their public nights, when they dance and ſee company, none of the boys of their own rank, by birth and fortune, are admitted. Theſe are the only perſons, with whom nature ſeems to have intended they ſhould unite, and live happily; but the prejudices of Calcutta counteract her purpoſe, and exclude them from their ſociety as beings of an inferior claſs. Young officers in the army, or civil ſervants of the Company, are alone deemed fit companions; and from the contemptible ideas they in general entertain of the whole race of country-born women, they are the moſt dangerous companions with whom they can aſſociate.

BUT female vanity bids defiance to all theſe conſiderations; and many young men of rank, and high expectations, have been unable to reſiſt its artifices, aided by the ſtratagems of the miſtreſs of the ſchool.

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Marriages of this kind have not been unfrequent; but they are always unhappy. With regard to the parties themſelves, they are either excluded from ſociety, or admitted with ſuch caution and ceremonious reſerve, as muſt continually put them in mind of their degradation. The conſequence of ſuch matches to connections in Europe are equally diſtreſſing. Parents, in particular, imagine their children loſt or thrown away by ſuch marriages: they have brought many a grey head with ſorrow to the grave.

Few females of colour, in proportion to their number, can be diſpoſed of in this manner. To educate them, therefore, expreſsly with ſuch views, entirely precludes every hope of uniting them with their equals, or their own claſs. It never fails to produce a train of ideas and expectations in the female breaſt, of which the diſappointment, is miſery; and their completion, ruin.

No perſon of reflection can enter the numerous boarding-ſchools in Calcutta, without feeling the moſt melancholy forebodings regarding the fate of ſo many young perſons. To behold ſo many of the riſing generation immured within their walls with hardly any probability of making a ſafe or honourable retreat, is certainly diſtreſſing: becauſe it compels your imagination to anticipate the ſad alternative before many of them, that of living in a ſtate of want and diſappointment, or of ſubſiſting by means fatal to happineſs and reputation.

BESIDES theſe foundations, there are ſome others of inferior note, equally laudable, eſtabliſhed, and maintained by the munificence of the inhabitants of Calcutta. A free-ſchool which educates near two hundred children, under the management of the veſtry, is, in part, ſupported by voluntary contributions only. Two lacks of rupees were originally devoted to the education of the children of the poor. The intereſt of that ſum continues ſtill to be applied for that purpoſe: another ſchool, however, nearly equally numerous has been added to this, upon a fund raiſed merely by caſual benefactions. An oratorio has of late been performed annually to aid its funds, which promiſes a conſiderable ſupply of revenue.

To theſe inſtitutions, ſo creditable to the humanity and benevolence of the inhabitants of Calcutta, the native hoſpital muſt be added. This inſtitution is alſo ſupported by voluntary contribution; and was contrived for the relief of ſuch natives, as from accidents or diſeaſe, might want medical aid. Thouſands, in ſo populous a place, muſt be in want of aſſiſtance, while they are too indigent to obtain it on any other footing than the charity of Europeans. And it is highly to the honour of our countrymen, that they have deviſed and ſupported a ſcheme of relief for diſeaſe and indigence, which, as far as I can learn, has never been ſuggeſted by the humanity of their native monarchs. There were hoſpitals for dogs,

cats, lions, and ſeveral other animals, but none for men.

THE medical gentlemen in Calcutta are frequently applied to in private by the natives, for advice in their ailments, and if really in pain, the dictates of nature prevail againſt the bigotry of ſuperſtition; for they generally take their medicines, in ſpite of the prohibitions of their religion.

THE confidence which the natives, in every trying occaſion, put in the ſuperior ſkill of Europeans, amounts almoſt of itſelf to a confutation of thoſe perſons, who, without any means of knowledge, are conſtantly holding up their attainments as ſuperior to every thing known in Europe.

A very expenſive eſtabliſhment for the education of the junior ſervants of the Company, has lately been inſtituted; but as it is for *buſineſs*, and not *education*, that theſe gentlemen are ſent to India, it is difficult to foreſee any benefit that will ever reſult from this meaſure. Inſtruction in the native dialects is in general all that is neceſſary to qualify them for the exerciſe of their duty, and this they have hitherto received from Moonſhees at the ſpare hours that are not employed in their different vocations. The practice of their profeſſional duty of itſelf greatly aſſiſted them in acquiring the language of the natives; while it prevented the loſs of ſeveral years, and a great

great expence, which is incurred at this diſſolute ſeminary.

India has not hitherto improved the aſſiduity of Europeans in the purſuit of literature: and there are at preſent in that country but few men adequately qualified to fill a profeſſional chair. Young men, therefore, from Europe muſt deem their time ill ſpent if compelled to hear lectures from profeſſors but indifferently qualified to be teachers of a pariſh ſchool.

The conqueſt of the Myſore was ſome how connected with this inſtitution, an event which it was deſtined to commemorate; yet brilliant as the execution of that enterprize certainly was, it was concerted without any regard to time, or ſupplies of proviſions, a circumſtance which had nearly fruſtrated the bravery of our army *.

THE

* Since writing the above, the Court of Directors have aboliſhed this College; the moſt expenſive erection which vanity or folly had ever made upon their treaſury.

THE EFFECTS OF A HOT CLIMATE ON EUROPEANS.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1796.

THE climate of almoſt every intra-tropical region is unfavourable to European conſtitutions. Thoſe flat countries where moiſture is combined with heat, are unexceptionably more injurious to health than ſuch as are dry. Hence the climate of Batavia has long proved one of the moſt fatally pernicious ever viſited by Europeans.

CALCUTTA was at firſt deemed hardly leſs deſtructive than Batavia. Its ſituation ſurrounded by a flat and marſhy country, was productive of the ſame effects. The vicinity has ſince been cleared conſiderably of trees and jungle; and ſome of the more offenſive marſhes have been drained; much, however, ſtill muſt be done, before it can merit the character of a healthy town.

EURO-

EUROPEANS are now however much better acquainted with the means of counteracting the effects of a bad climate than formerly. Regularity of living, and temperance, are much more prevalent among the preſent inhabitants, than the firſt adventurers. It was not uncommon for his acquaintances, when a friend had laid in a freſh ſtock of wines, to meet in his houſe at dinner, in order to give their judgment of its quality; and on theſe occaſions, perhaps, the whole cheſt of claret was conſumed at one ſederunt. The conſequences were often ſo fatal, that the next meeting of this ſocial crew was not unfrequently to witneſs the funeral of one of their companions.

THE perfection to which the medical art has arrived by longer experience, has alſo had a happy effect in preſerving the lives of many Europeans. The diſeaſes of the country are now well underſtood by almoſt every practitioner; the practice is ſimple and deciſive. Fevers, and the whole train of bilious complaints, are more efficaciouſly treated, or at leaſt yield more certainly to their preſcriptions than any ſet of diſeaſes equally malignant do in Britain. Were fever as dangerous here as in Europe, its frequency would prove fatal almoſt to every inhabitant before reſiding twelve months in the country.

WHATEVER be the exciting cauſe of bile; whether accelerated circulation from the heat of the climate, or relaxation from the ſame cauſe, its exceſs is

in

in general the *origo mali.* It produces fever, dyſentery, with a long train of nervous and paralytic diſorders; every ſtage of which has a peculiar and appropriate treatment, which is ſoon acquired, and pretty uniformly followed by every practitioner: and there is perhaps no part of the world where the profeſſion can boaſt of an equal number of cures; or at leaſt of relief ſo uniformly following its preſcriptions.

After all, however, the climate of India proves a ſevere trial to every European conſtitution; many fall a ſacrifice to its firſt attacks; many more linger on in a ſtate of increaſing debility, and painful diſeaſe, which reduces them to a ſtate more reſembling ghoſts than men; the remainder who for years continue to combat its influence, finding that they alſo are at laſt to be worſted in the conflict, are glad to retreat to Europe, there to eke out, or to huſband the remains of life.

A ſallow and livid complexion is ſo univerſal in Bengal, that when you behold a face of the roſeate hue, you can pronounce that its owner is newly arrived, nearly with as much certainty as if you heard that part of his hiſtory from his own mouth. Even in the ordinary health of perſons not ſuppoſed to be materially injured by the climate, they are capable of little exertion or fatigue: in the hot ſeaſon of hardly any at all. It is not uncommon to find, at that period, the whole officers of a battalion, except one or two,

two, incapable of doing duty; and this without extraordinary or alarming complaint.

THE fair ſex are almoſt equally liable with the men to ſuffer by the climate. Their regularity is often more uniform, and their expoſure to the weather leſs frequent, yet there is hardly a ſingle female complexion in Bengal that retains the bloom of health. Beauty in every country is a fading flower; here it is almoſt ephemeral; for you ſeldom behold it a ſingle ſeaſon without ſuffering much depredation, perhaps a total decay.

FORMERLY female adventurers in India were few; but highly ſucceſsful. Emboldened by this ſucceſs, and countenanced by their example, ſuch numbers have embarked in this ſpeculation as threaten to defeat its purpoſe. The irregularities of our Government, which formerly afforded an opportunity to ſome of rapidly accumulating wealth, and enabled them to marry, are now done away. Few, in compariſon, now find themſelves in circumſtances that invite to matrimonial engagements; hence a number of unfortunate females are ſeen wandering for years in a ſingle and unconnected ſtate. Some are annually forced to abandon the forlorn hope; and return to Europe, after the loſs of beauty, too frequently their only property. It is greatly to be wiſhed that the Cape of Good Hope may as effectually revive the ſpirits of theſe ill-fated adventurers, as, from its name, we muſt believe it did thoſe of its firſt diſcoverers.

verers. If in future times it realize their almoſt vaniſhed proſpects, it muſt be regarded as a valuable ſtation; for it will prevent a part of the ſpecies from ſuffering, on their return, a mortification the more peculiarly grievous, ſince it commands no man's pity.

PERHAPS there are few even of thoſe who find every reaſonable hope that they had formed of India gratified, that do not inwardly regret having abandoned their native land: the candid, on ſumming up the whole account, ſeem to acknowledge that the meaſure has neither added to the number of real enjoyments, nor increaſed their virtue: they find when the ſcene of life draws to a cloſe, and the curtain is ready to drop, that it might probably have met with a leſs chequered, but equally happy termination, by a leſs troubleſome and circuitous route.

IF this prove the caſe with ſuch as meet with employments, or lucrative appointments in this country; thoſe unfortunate young men who riſk ſo long a voyage without any ſpecific views, or particular profeſſion, are in a ſituation much to be commiſerated. Under mental uneaſineſs, and the pain of diſappointment, diſeaſes in a warm climate are all aggravated, and more certainly fatal. Thus has many a promiſing youth fallen a ſacrifice to unſubſtantial hopes, and diſappointed ambition; many a uſeful and enterpriſing ſubject has been loſt to the State from the falſe notions entertained at home with regard to the opu-

pulence of India; and the golden dreams which ignorance has indulged regarding its trade.

THE great military atchievements which have been performed, as well as the fortunes that have been made by ſome individuals in this country, make a powerful impreſſion on the minds of young men. Long before they have finiſhed their education at ſchool, their imaginations are affected by the mania of going to India, and of their acting their part in all the brave and romantic adventures of a Coot, a Lawrence, or a Clive. The ſpirit of adventure is kept remarkably active in Scotland, where all receive ſome education, and where the eyes of the community are ſo often called to behold ſucceſsful examples of thoſe who have finiſhed their career of Aſiatic enterpriſe.

WITHOUT attempting to eradicate this uſeful bias in the minds of our youth, it is much to be wiſhed that it were oftener guided by men of experience; for without being attached to ſome department of the ſervice, or educated to ſome profeſſion, there is hardly any rational hope of ſucceſs in India. Here all the inferior departments of clerks, and overſeers, are neceſſarily filled by natives, and it is by thoſe gradations that in Europe young men riſe to opulence in the commercial world. Diſtant as this country is from the ſeat of Government, and ſtrictly as all outlets to it are guarded, there are perhaps ten Europeans in every department, for one that can

obtain profitable employment; and of the great object in migration, that of making a fortune, there are more than an hundred to one unſucceſsful in the purſuit.

Of late the commercial proſperity and wealth of Britain has ſo much increaſed, that in future the wealthy part of our community will not be found among thoſe who have returned from abroad, but among that portion who have remained in their native country.

OF THE RANK AND CONDITION OF THE DIFFERENT CLASSES.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1797.

THE ſtate of ſociety and of government in every country of Europe, threw the inhabitants into a ſimilar ſituation with regard to rank: there the whole community conſiſted, during the feudal periods, of licentious chieftains who overawed the ſovereign, and kept the people in a ſtate of ſlavery. The prieſthood was the only order whoſe rights and rank were reſpected, in theſe ages of ſuperſtition and anarchy.

EVERY circumſtance ſeems to prove that the Hindoos were, in a remote period, nearly in the ſame ſtate. The different diſtricts, originally governed by independent princes, were gradually brought to ſubmit to an emperor whoſe dominions were circumſcribed by the natural boundaries of the country. In this ſituation of affairs there were ſeveral kings or great

great rajahs, who were tributary to the emperor; and other inferior rajahs who paid tribute to their reſpective ſuperiors, and who, when ſummoned into the field, attended them with a number of men proportioned to the extent of their poſſeſſions *.

THE far greater part of the lands of Hindoſtan were held by this military tenure; but as in Europe, ſo here, there were others appropriated to the church, and to charitable purpoſes: we find too, in many parts, certain commons attached to different villages, which were cultivated by the joint labour of the inhabitants, or paſtured by their cattle in common.

THE ryots, or actual cultivators of the ſoil, are ſtill in the ſame ſituation here which they were in among the ancient Romans, *adſcripti glebæ*, a ſort of appendage to the land, and ſold along with it. This was the caſe in England as late as the time of King John, when it was ſtipulated by one of the proviſions of the boaſted Magna Charta, that on reſtoring to a ward his eſtates after his minority, they ſhould be delivered *ſine vaſto hominum vel rerum* *.

IN

* Vid. Sketches of the manners and cuſtoms of the Hindoos.

* Though the natives are not poſitively ſold with an eſtate, they muſt, from the nature of their ſituation, change maſters along with it.

In this country, the ryots have hardly any ſecure leaſes; they were allowed a certain portion of the crop to maintain their families and their cattle; but ſeem not to have been entruſted with the ſeed for next ſeaſon, that being furniſhed by the proprietor. The proportion of produce allowed the peaſant muſt, according to the ſoil, have always been very different. The barrenneſs of the lands, the difficulty of cultivation, and the failure or abundance of a crop, always affect the portion left to the huſbandman.

In countries plentifully ſupplied with water, the labour of the huſbandman is diminiſhed, while his crops are more abundant; but on the coaſt of Coromandel, where the ſoil is thin and ſandy, and the water ſcarce, greater exertion is required; and the recompence is much leſs conſiderable. From the circumſtance of there being no leaſe ſtrictly adhered to, the condition of the peaſant is nearly the ſame, whatever be the produce of his labour: he is univerſally poor. His houſe, clothing, and implements of every kind, frequently do not amount to the value of a pound ſterling. Univerſal poverty and nakedneſs is the characteriſtic of nine tenths of all the people, not Britiſh ſubjects, in Hindoſtan; but you muſt not conclude that this is accompanied with the ſame degree of ſuffering and wretchedneſs that would be felt in a ſimilar ſtate of indigence in Europe. Their wants are here few: clothing is hardly neceſſary for eight months of the year: drink is unknown beyond the ſimple beverage of water; and the ſimplicity of their

their food enables them to ſubſiſt on vegetables, which are plenty, with a ſmall portion of grain. An Hindoo feels himſelf comfortable on the ſame fare on which an Engliſhman would languiſh and ſtarve.

Such are the ranks of the people as far as they ſeem to be influenced by government; but the prevalence of ſuperſtition has moulded their ſociety into a more complex and artificial ſyſtem. According to its injunctions, the Hindoos are divided into four caſts; the Brahmins, the Katry, the Bhyſe, and the Sodera. Beſides theſe caſts, now well known in Europe, there are a very conſiderable number which belong to neither, which, in the language of the country, are called Chandalahs, or Pariahs, and conſiſt of thoſe who have been outcaſts from all the ranks, on account of their own, or forefathers delinquency; for by the rigid diſcipline of the Brahmins, ſins are viſited to greater extent than to the third or fourth generation.

The ſentence of excommunication is here more terrible than death: the perſon lying under it is deemed polluted, and if touched by another it renders him alſo unclean, till he has waſhed, and purified his perſon and his garments. The perſon, therefore, is not only excluded from ſociety, but he cannot enter a temple, or be preſent at any religious ceremony; he is rendered incapable of any office, and the conſequences of this terrible doom are ſuppoſed to extend to another life.

The

THE rank of the different caſts is not only laid down in the vedahs, or ſacred books of the Hindoos, but their duties are preſcribed there with ſome preciſion. "The duty of the Brahmins is peace, ſelf-reſtraint, patience, rectitude, wiſdom, and learning. Thoſe of the Katry, or military caſt, are bravery, glory, not to flee from the field, rectitude, generoſity, and princely conduct. The natural duty of the Bhyſe, is to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle, to buy and ſell. The natural duty of the Sordera is ſervitude *." This ſacred volume proceeded from Brimha, one of the three † children of Brahma, the ſupreme Being. The Saſtras and Pouranahs are commentaries upon theſe, and like the traditions of the Jews and of the Romiſh church, of very high authority, but not equally holy, nor binding upon conduct.

THE Brahmins alone are permitted to read and explain the vedahs; the other claſſes would incur inexpiable guilt by inſpecting them: the Katry tribe is alone allowed to hear them; the Pouranahs are deemed ſufficiently ſacred to be liſtened to by vulgar ears: even to hear the ſcriptures read is deemed too great a privilege for the degraded race of Sorderas.

As if theſe reſtrictions were inſufficient, every profeſſion and art has a diſtinct rank and ſtation aſſigned it,

* Vide Bhagvat Geeta.

† The other two are Viſhnu and Sheva.

it, from which its profeſſors can never emerge, nor can they change their hereditary employment for any other. Hence there are nearly an hundred * ſubordinate tribes in the ſociety of natives here, which do not intermarry nor aſſociate except with their own peers. There is in Calcutta, I am told, a native † who is employed in drawing an individual of each claſs occupied in his profeſſional labour.

The Brahmins who have entailed theſe reſtrictions on the reſt of ſociety, are themſelves under great reſtraint with regard to the articles of food. Rice, milk, and ghee with ſpices, are the moſt conſiderable articles of their diet; for they are prohibited from ſhedding blood, or eating any thing that has had life: milk as coming from the cow is deemed the pureſt food; and for this claſs of animals we have had frequent opportunity to witneſs their veneration.

A ſimilar religious prejudice for the ox obtained among the Egyptians, Phenicians, Athenians, and other nations; perhaps it was originally derived from the Eaſt, which appears to have been the great mint of ſuperſtition to the reſt of the world. There are ſome even of our own divines, who have attempted to draw an analogy between our theological ſyſtem

* Vide de la Croze, Hiſt. du Chriſt. des Indes.

† Mr Salvins, whoſe work is nearly completed.

tem and theſe ancient fables; an attempt equally fruitleſs and fooliſh. What confirmation, for example, or illuſtration of the doctrine of the Trinity can there be derived from there being three principal Hindu divinities, Brimha, Viſhnu, and Sheva? or becauſe theſe deities have undergone ſeveral incarnations for the inſtruction and regeneration of mankind, does that give any greater credibility to our ſyſtem? yet our zealots * have attempted this, without ſeeming to be aware of the tendency of their purſuit. To prove that our Faith is ſimilar to, or derived from that of the Hindoos, is, we truſt, impoſſible; if it were otherwiſe, the ſyſtem of both countries would ſeem to reſt upon the ſame foundation.

THOUGH the Brahmins conſtitute the higheſt claſs from which the prieſts are taken, yet the whole of that order do not officiate in ſacred ceremonies; the prieſts among the Jews were indeed of the tribe of Levi, but all the Levites were not prieſts. The Brahmins, accordingly, who are not in the prieſthood, may aſſume other employments, but are not allowed to engage as menial ſervants. They become ſecretaries to perſons of high rank, or clerks to bankers and merchants. Some bear arms; but even in that ſituation they obſerve all the reſtrictions incumbent upon their order, and receive a ſuperior

* Vide Morice's Ind. Antiquities.

degree of reſpect from all the other caſts, but not equal to that conferred upon the actual prieſts.

THOSE in the immediate ſervice of the altar, confine themſelves to the performance of religious ceremonies, to ſtudy, and to the education of youth. From the great partiality to their caſt, which evidently pervades theſe laws, it is probable that they were drawn up by themſelves. They claim a ſuperior rank to princes; for though a Rajah will receive and taſte, with reſpect, food that has been prepared by a Brahmin, the latter dare not taſte any thing that has been touched by the former.

THE ſame iniquitous diſtinction of perſons, that pervaded the Gothic ſyſtem of laws, is obſervable in the Hindoo code: "If a Brahmin," ſays the law, "commit a crime deſerving a capital puniſhment, the magiſtrate ſhall ſentence him to perpetual impriſonment. There is no crime ſo great as that of murdering a Brahmin; and therefore no magiſtrate ſhall ever deviſe the death of one; nor cut off any of his limbs. If a Sordera give much and frequent trouble to a Brahmin, the magiſtrate ſhall put him to death." In matters of precedence, and giving place on the road, all are obliged to yield to a Brahmin.

THE next order to this is the Khaſhtria, or Katry, and upon this caſt the functions of royalty are devolved. The authority and the poſſeſſions

of

of Rajahs are, as with princes in Europe, hereditary; deſcending in the line of legitimate male-primogeniture: but this extends only to the firſt degree; for in default of a ſon, the prince may ſet aſide every other relation, and adopt a ſucceſſor; who, from the period of adoption, obtains the rights and appellation of his ſon *. The younger branches of a Rajah's family ſerve in the army, and hold lands by a feudal tenure.

ALL commercial tranſactions are committed to the Bhyſe, or Bannian caſt, who ſometimes poſſeſs individually immenſe wealth. The Sordera tribe, which is, by far, more numerous than all the reſt, compriſes the artiſans, and labourers of every deſcription. The great deſideratum in European ſociety ſeems to be a proper means of ſecuring happineſs and contentment with their lot to the labouring poor. This *chef d' œuvre* of government ſeems to be ſecured here by the influence of religion. By this the Sordera is taught to believe that he is placed in this his ſtation by way of trial; or on account of offences committed in a previous ſtate; that by reſignation and and piety he will enjoy greater happineſs in a ſubſequent life, and in another world.

HENCE

* An inſtance of this has juſt happened to the Nabob Vizier of Oude.

HENCE the attachment of a Hindoo to his rank and ſtation is equal to that he has for religion itſelf. This is frequently diſplayed by the meaneſt claſſes that engage in the European ſervice: a ſeapoy, or a bearer is as obſtinately obſervant of the cuſtoms of his order as a Brahmin; while in Europe the ſame claſs imitate their betters.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

THE perſecuting ſpirit, and religious bigotry, which characteriſed the firſt European adventurers in America, have tarniſhed the luſtre of all their atchievements, and branded their conduct with a degree of infamy, which their acknowledged bravery and military talents have never been able to obliterate. Happily for the inhabitants of Aſia, that fervor of zeal, which devoured every thing that oppoſed it, like a conſuming fire, had either ſubſided, or been tempered by knowledge, before any nation of Europe had obtained conſiderable territorial poſſeſſions in this populous country. Had the ſuperſtitious Hindoos fallen under the military teaching of any European nation at that intolerant period, it is hard to conjecture to what length perſecution might have been carried. The attachment of the natives to their ſu-

per-

perſtitious rites, is exceſſive; and can only be ſurpaſſed by the obſtinate bigotry with which every European of that age enforced the tenets of his faith upon the ill-fated unbeliever.

EQUAL havock and deſtruction would in all probability have marked the progreſs of the Portugueze arms, as that of the Spaniards in the new world; for the former, as well as the latter people, were actuated by a zeal incompatible with all the forbearance of oppoſite opinions: The lapſe of two centuries has brought about a change in the ſentiments of Europeans, ſo complete, as to approach the oppoſite extreme of indifference: a ſtate which is, perhaps, neither more rational, nor leſs dangerous to public virtue, than religious bigotry.

AN exceſſive ardour in the accumulation of wealth has ſuccceded to this religious fervor, and has frequently diſplayed itſelf equally powerful in deſtroying ſentiments of virtue and humanity, as the moſt intemperate zeal in diſſeminating fanatical opinions. The mercantile jealouſy of the Dutch at Amboyna, ſhone forth in colours as diſgraceful to humanity as Spaniſh bigotry in Peru.

WHEN young perſons from Europe, of little information, and ſtill leſs reflection, obſerve the numberleſs puerile, and debaſing ceremonies of the Hindoo worſhip; reſtrained, in this inſtance, by no prejudice of education, they ſee the impoſitions of prieſt-

craft,

craft, and the devout ſubmiſſion of ignorance, in the full extent of their enormity; and pity or deſpiſe that credulity, which can be impoſed upon, by artifices ſo groſs, or which can embrace opinions ſo abſurd. As religious eſtabliſhments muſt in every country, as far as they have been conſtituted and upheld by man, be tarniſhed with ſimilar imperfections, they begin to fancy they diſcover much impoſture in all; and to imagine that all ſtand on one baſis, upon which the crafty have raiſed a ſuperſtructure to overawe the timid, or inſnare the weak. Full of ſuch notions, which they find countenanced in ſociety under the appellation of liberality of ſentiment, they fancy that to be lax in principle is to become liberal in mind; and that to ridicule religion is a ſufficient title to make them be ranked with the wiſe.

But when the reſtraints of religion are overthrown, the ties of virtue and duty are alſo ſoon broken. In remote diſtricts, where perſons of this deſcription have ſometimes been inveſted with command, there is no doubt that the looſeneſs of their conduct has too nearly correſponded with theſe principles. In ſuch inſtances, the poor natives have found that their property, however ſmall, has been unable to overbalance European virtue; and that their ſufferings however afflictive to themſelves, have not been able to awaken in the minds of their oppreſſors an apprehenſion of future retribution.

HAPPILY for the honour of the Britiſh name, examples of cruelty and rapine exerciſed againſt the defenceleſs natives, are far more rare than the unfounded clamours of the multitude at home have given out. Happily too, for the natives themſelves, they are becoming daily more uncommon; and if the controul and energy of our government, ſhall become equal to its integrity, they will never be repeated.

THAT the Court of Directors of the India Company were not aware of the neceſſity of ſupporting the intereſts of religion and virtue among their ſervants, in a country whoſe diſtance deprives them, in a great meaſure, of controul over them, it would be raſh to affirm. It is, however, certain that neither the number nor choice of the clergymen they have appointed in Bengal, has been in proportion to the number of their ſervants, nor the importance of the object in view; whether you regard keeping up the appearance of religion among Europeans, or diſſeminating its principles among the natives.

ON this eſtabliſhment their full complement of chaplains is only nine *; their actual number ſeldom ex-

* There are a few others at Madras and Bombay; but altogether there is too ſmall a number to keep up the reſtraints of decency and religion in a ſociety conſtituted like that of the Europeans in India.

exceeds five or ſix. Two of theſe being always fixed at the Preſidency, all the other European ſtations, diſperſed over a tract of country much more extenſive than Great Britain, are committed to the charge of the other three or four individuals. In conſequence of this, the preſence of a clergyman is ſeldom ſeen, or even expected, to ſolemnize the uſual ceremonies of marriages, baptiſms, or funerals. Prayers are read ſometimes at the ſtations where a chaplain happens to reſide; but I have ſeldom heard of any ſermon delivered, except by his Majeſty's chaplains, and thoſe at Calcutta. Hence, it muſt happen, that many perſons have left England at an early age, and reſided in India perhaps for twenty or thirty years, without once having heard divine ſervice, till their return *.

It is not, ſurely, to be wondered at, that religion and moral duties ſhould be forgotten in a country where their utility is never inculcated, nor the neceſſity even of their appearance enforced. With irreligious principles, irregular conduct is intimately connected. Gaming, debauchery, and all kinds of extravagance in living, are generally in its train. The man whoſe fortune has been ruined by diſſipa-

* Since writing the above, this negligence has been corrected; yet many from indolence, or contempt of the inſtitution of their country, have wilfully neglected the opportu when offered, of attending on the offices of religion.

tion, or at a gaming table, is certainly not the moſt likely to withſtand temptation in the execution of his duty. On the contrary, thoſe whoſe profligate habits have reduced them to diſtreſs, have in general been the only perſons who have attempted to retrieve their affairs at the expence either of the Company, or of the native inhabitants.

In the end, therefore, the economy of the Court of Directors in conſtituting their religious eſtabliſhment, may appear to be founded on falſe principles. The whole charge incurred for religious duties, both to the European inhabitants and natives of Bengal, does not amount to a ſum nearly equal to the monthly ſalary paid to ſome individuals in their ſervice; whoſe only employment is diſſipation, and whoſe importance to the country can only be eſtimated by the miſchief done by their example.

The ſmall emolument held out to the clerical profeſſion here, affords, perhaps, another inſtance in which prudential conſiderations defeat their own purpoſe. Men of decent conduct, and reſpectability of character, cannot be ſuppoſed willing, for a trivial ſalary, to embark for a part of the world ſo diſtant as India, where they muſt bid adieu to all preferment at home: while the ſervice in which they embark offers only preſent ſubſiſtence, but holds out no gradation of rank or emolument. For an appointment in India ſuch men rarely apply: and as often as characters of a contrary deſcription are ſent here, they

they invariably do more harm than good. Men who engage in all the fashionable dissipations of the country, are ill calculated to support the dignity of religion among their countrymen, and little likely to withdraw the natives from their errors. The standard of truth will, if committed to such hands, be but feebly upheld, or perhaps altogether disgraced; and, in either case, it will always be accompanied by few followers.

PRAC-

PRACTICAL INCONVENIENCES OF THE HINDU SUPERSTITION.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

THAT the ſuperſtition of the Hindoos is, in many reſpects, calculated to promote the ends of ſociety, will not be denied. The rigid temperance, if not abſtinence, which all its votaries are bound to obſerve, certainly preſerves them from many irregularities, which too frequently diſturb ſocial happineſs in Europe; where drunkenneſs and intemperance are believed to deſtroy a greater number of inhabitants than the ſword. If the health and conſtitution of many Europeans are injured by theſe vices, we may fairly pronounce that induſtry and wealth are impaired in a ſtill higher degree. From the vices of intemperance, however, neither the Hindoos nor Muſſulmans are entirely exempted. The former by means of *Bang*, opium, or tobacco, can, and ſometimes do encounter all the dangers of intoxication, which

which we experience from the uſe of fermented liquors. With regard to the latter, the prohibitions of their prophet make comparatively ſlight impreſſion. The diſtinction of caſts makes no part of the Mahommedan inſtitutions: and hence they are not compelled to obſerve theſe with that rigid uniformity which the dreadful ſentence of excommunication fails not to enforce upon the followers of Brahma. Intoxication, either with ſpirits, opium, or tobacco, is by no means uncommon among the Muſſulmans all over Hindoſtan. Among our domeſtic ſervants, and in the Company's native regiments, the difference is great and palpable between the Hindoo and Moorman, in point of ſobriety. Proud, diſſolute, and vindictive, the latter is a much leſs manageable ſervant than the former, and upon all occaſions more apt to betray his truſt. His diſſolute habits detain him in poverty, and conſequently oblige him to remain in the army, while the Hindoo becomes independent, and may leave it.

The numerous ablutions enjoined by the Hindoo, are attended with advantages, perhaps, leſs doubtful than thoſe derived from their abſtinence. Almoſt every individual bathes once, or twice a day, and in a warm climate this muſt not only brace the limbs, but preſerve health by promoting cleanlineſs.

In eſtimating the advantages reſulting to ſociety from the prevailing ſuperſtition of this country, the two foregoing particulars include almoſt all that can be

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be advanced in its favour. To counterbalance theſe upon the other hand, we have to notice afterwards many great obſtacles which it oppoſes to the improvements of huſbandry, and the increaſe of population, by precluding the inhabitants from the uſe of many important articles of food. The number of feſtivals and holidays, to be totally conſecrated to the performance of its numerous and expenſive rites, certainly tends to diſſipate the minds of the indolent people, and to withdraw them from thoſe labours from which they derive their ſupport. Theſe ſhews not only occupy the tradeſman's time, which is his revenue, but they muſt waſte the ſuſtenance which he has provided for his family; by the neceſſity he lies under of contributing to their expence.

In the Hindoo almanack, the number of holidays for the year 1797, are no leſs than ninety-one; and though ſome of theſe are not of great note, yet others claim their ſole attention, for three or four days together. This muſt certainly prove a heavy tax on the induſtry of any people, but more eſpecially of the improvident Hindoos, who ſeldom can boaſt of ſufficient foreſight to provide againſt a few days either of ſickneſs or want.

All that has been ſaid againſt the want of induſtry in Roman Catholic countries may, with double force, be urged againſt the Hindoos. The moſt indolent nation in Europe far excels in every exertion, whe-

whether mental or corporeal, this liſtleſs and unambitious race.

THIS laſt *trait* of their character leads to another powerful obſtacle to ſocial and political improvement, ariſing from the ſuperſtition of the natives: the diviſion of the whole ſociety into four great diſtinct caſts or tribes, and a much greater number of inferior claſſifications, the boundaries of which are inſurmountable, even by the pureſt virtue, or the moſt conſpicuous merit. This not only precludes a man from the profeſſion to which nature or inclination may have bent his talents, but it alſo in a great meaſure robs him of every motive of honeſt ambition to excel in that ſphere where his birth has fixed him; becauſe even then, eminence in his profeſſion can confer no additional rank, and but little diſtinction.

THE principle of emulation is the grand ſpring of all induſtry, and conſequently of improvement: in Europe, where its operation is leſs reſtrained, it models and arranges the whole ſtructure of ſociety. There the manners of one age differ as remarkably from a ſucceeding one, as if the people were not the ſame; one period is warlike; another commercial; and a third is ſplendid and luxurious, or perhaps learned: in Aſia, as the condition of individuals remains unalterable, ſo does the ſtate of ſociety. The deſcriptions given of India in the days of Alexander, may be applied to with equal fidelity by the Britiſh hiſtorian, as they were by the Grecian. The ſimple

dreſs

dreſs of the Hindoo, his rude hut, and his feeble inſtruments of agriculture, are the ſame at preſen as they were two thouſand years ago; and if the ſame cauſes continue to operate, they muſt remain for many ages without amendment, and without change.

Some authors have aſcribed the perfection to which the arts have been carried in Bengal to this ſeparation of profeſſions; and the neceſſity which every family lies under of following the trade of its progenitors. It is here that this diſtribution of profeſſions early carried the arts to a certain progreſs conſiderably beyond what they are found among ſavage nations, and is the great cauſe of their remaining in that half perfected ſtate. No art in Hindoſtan is carried to the ſame degree of perfection as in Europe, except ſome articles in which the cheapneſs of labour gives them an advantage, as in the caſe of the fine muſlins at Dacca. For a long time we only had it in our power to make a direct compariſon between Europeans and Aſiatics in the art of war: and hiſtory teſtifies how miſerably deficient the latter have always proved in enterpriſes of this nature.

It is but a few years ſince the cotton manufactory has been eſtabliſhed in Britain, and by the laſt reports I have peruſed on this ſubject, from a committee of the Houſe of Commons, it is ſet forth, that double the quantity of cotton cloth, which the Company imports from India, is manufactured at home. In a few years hence, it is probable that all the

the manufactured produce of India will bear hardly any proportion to that of Great Britain, and that too in the very article of which the Hindoos have had the excluſive poſſeſſion for ſo many ages, and that in the ſame fabric which they were deemed the only people of ſufficient ingenuity to execute.

The manufactures of Europe, to every man who is unprejudiced, will certainly appear infinitely ſuperior, both in the number and variety of articles, and in the neatneſs and elegance of their execution, to thoſe even of China. This, at leaſt, is certain, that in proportion to the number of inhabitants, Britain exports more of its manufactured produce than any other part of the world.

It may be concluded, therefore, that the diviſion of labour, ariſing from the ſeparate caſts, does not perfect manufactures, but impedes their progreſs, by precluding the choice of profeſſions, and deſtroying the principle of emulation. But the Hindoo ſuperſtition is further hoſtile to the comfort of ſociety from the number of pilgrimages and rigid penances which, if it does not poſitively enjoin, it certainly commends. At certain feſtivals, vaſt crowds of the natives, from all places of India, reſort to Jaugernaut, and other Pagodas of extraordinary ſanctity. The diſtance of theſe journeys, the expence of ſupport, and the time conſumed by them, muſt prove extremely burdenſome. After their arrival, the attendance of ſuch multitudes, and their ſtruggles to

obtain admiſſion, coſt many of the aged and feeble their lives, by being trode to death in the crowd: the fame of ſuperior ſanctity is all that theſe deluded pilgrims carry home. The intereſted Brahmins, under one pious pretence or another, are ſure to deprive them of all the money in their poſſeſſion.

MANY thouſands of people are employed in carrying water from Hurdwar to Juggernaut, for the uſes of that temple. It is there ſuppoſed to be peculiarly holy, as it iſſues from what is called the Cow's Mouth. This ſuperſtitious notion is the cauſe of as much loſt labour as would long ſince have converted the largeſt province of Aſia into a garden. The numbers thus employed are immenſe; they travel with two flaſks of the water ſlung over the ſhoulder by means of an elaſtic piece of Bamboo. The ſame quantity which employs perhaps fifteen thouſand perſons, might eaſily be carried down the Ganges in a few boats annually. Princes and families of diſtinction have this water carried to them in all parts of Hindoſtan; it is drank at feaſts, as well as upon religious occaſions.

THE fanaticiſm of ſome, as if ſuch journies were not ſufficiently tedious and fatiguing, when performed in the uſual manner, has deviſed an extraordinary method of enhancing their merit, by encreaſing the difficulty of performing them. Some hundred miles have been lately travelled by a zealous devotee, who proſtrated himſelf, and meaſured every inch

inch of the ground with his body, as he advanced. Years muſt have been conſumed, by this deluded wretch, in proſecuting this devout imagination, which can only tend to make his life uſeleſs, and his example dangerous to ſociety.

THE utmoſt rigour of diſcipline, that eccleſiaſtic power ventured to impoſe in the darkeſt ages of papal tyranny in Europe, fall far ſhort of the degrading and painful mortifications of the Aſiatic devotee. Some remain for ſo many years in one poſture, that they become incapable of uſing their limbs: ſome keep their fiſts ſhut till the nails penetrate through the back of the hands: others hold their arms ſuſpended above the head till they become ſhrivelled and incapable of motion. One of the annual ceremonies of the Hindoo ſuperſtition, exhibits thouſands all over India ſwung in a rope, by means of a hook paſſed through the muſcles of the back. Thus the devotee exulting amidſt torture, becauſe applauded by the multitude, paſſes hours ſuſpended by a lofty pole to the height of forty feet; and is ſwung round with a rapidity which terrifies and aſtoniſhes the European by a juſt apprehenſion that the muſcles may give way, and daſh the infatuated victim to pieces.

THERE is no end to the deluſions of ſuperſtition, nor any bounds to the cruelties to which it can inſtigate people the moſt gentle and timid, with which hiſtory has made us acquainted. Some are perſuaded

ſuaded to regain their loſt rank in ſociety, by precipitating themſelves naked from a great height upon ſpikes and edged weapons. Others pierce their ſkin with a hot iron; in ſhort, cruelties too horrid for recital, and too extravagant to obtain belief, are daily provoking your pity or indignation, amidſt a people famed for humanity in every part of the world.

ONE part of the religious economy of this people, regarding their conduct towards the ſick and dying, cannot be beheld without the moſt melancholy impreſſions. When a ſick perſon's life is deſpaired of, he is carried by his relations to the bank of the river, and there, expoſed to the ſtorm, or the intenſe heat of the ſun, he is permitted or rather forced to reſign his breath. His mouth, noſe, and ears are cloſely ſtopped with the mud of the river; large veſſels of water are kept pouring upon him; and it is amidſt the agonies of diſeaſe, and the convulſive ſtruggles of ſuffocation, that the miſerable Hindoo bids adieu to his relations, and to his preſent exiſtence. This is called Gungah jatra; and when life is gone the corpſe is burnt, if the family can pay the expences, and the aſhes are thrown into the river.

DURING the months of September and October, the moſt fatal ſeaſon of the year to the natives of Bengal, you cannot paſs along the river without being annoyed by ſuch ſcenes of ſuperſtition, cruelty, and horror. If the perſon carried down to the bank die, according to expectation, or rather yield to thoſe pre-

precautions taken to ſecure his death, the body, together with the cot upon which it lies, is ſurrounded with dried wood, and thus conſumed by the flames. The aſhes are then ſcattered about the place, and bathed with water. This laſt ceremony performed, the attendants retire to their huts, with an indifference that ſeems to approach to inſenſibility.

In caſes of extreme poverty, where the property of the deceaſed is not ſufficient to procure wood, and ſuch caſes are common in Bengal, the body is committed entire to the ſtream immediately after death. Inconveniences attend this practice, of a nature ſtill more ſerious than the impreſſions of melancholy and diſguſt, which unavoidably ariſe, on beholding human carcaſſes devoured by kites and vultures, as they float along upon the ſurface of the water. The banks of the river become putrid and noxious; their exhalations propagate diſeaſe with an alarming rapidity in the neighbourhood of populous towns.

For ſome years paſt, the city of Moreſhadabad, and the adjoining villages of Calcapore, and Coſſimbazar, have been threatened with devaſtation, by the univerſality of diſeaſes at the ſeaſon already mentioned. Profeſſional men have imputed this in part to the impurity of the river, and the putridity of its banks, contracted by the depoſition of ſo many human carcaſes, and impure matters, as could not be carried away by the ſtrength of the ſtream.

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THE EFFECTS OF THIS SYSTEM ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE OF THE PEOPLE.

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Calcutta, Jan. 1798.

THE pernicious conſequences reſulting from the Hindoo ſyſtem to morals, have been as yet but partly explained. Of the ceremonies of their religion ſome are ſhewy, many abſurd, and not a few indecent. Their temples, in ſome places, are richly endowed, and maintain a numerous body of prieſts * and women conſecrated to their ſervice. The latter are taught to ſing and dance at the public feſtivals, in honour of the gods. The voluptuous indolence in which they are deſtined to ſpend their lives, renders them totally uſeleſs to ſociety; while the indecency of their geſtures, and levity of manners, give room to ſuſpect that they injure it by their example; and that their ſer-

* One temple in the Deccan formerly maintained forty thouſand; or more than double the number contained in the whole European empire of Great-Britain.

ſervices are oftener devoted to the prieſts, than the deities to whom they are conſecrated. Their temples themſelves contain images of creative power, and of fecundity too groſs for deſcription. Similar repreſentations are alſo diſplayed by their images, that are drawn through the ſtreets, amidſt the dancing, noiſe and acclamations of the multitude. The Ruth Jatra, or riding of the Gods, is at once cruel and indecent; their carriage, of immenſe height and ſize, is ſupported on ſixteen wheels, and drawn along by thouſands of fanatics, many of whom fall down below its wheels, and are inſtantly, as they believe, in poſſeſſion of a bleſſed immortality. Though it, perhaps, would be wrong to ſuppoſe, that ſuch repreſentations convey the ſame groſs and indelicate conceptions to the minds of the natives, that they muſt do to thoſe of Europeans, there can hardly remain a doubt that they affect the purity of their morals. A Roman would certainly return to mix in ſociety, with no advantage to his morals, after celebrating the orgies of Bacchus, or the impure ceremonies of the Bona Dea: neither can an Hindoo enter his family with any refined notions of continence and ſelf-denial, after beholding the laſcivious geſtures of the women, and the indecent attitudes of the images he has been worſhipping. To affirm this would be to aſſert, that our minds are neither affected with what we ſee, nor what we do. The Muſſulmen are addicted to every ſpecies of indulgence and debauchery, in a remarkable degree; and if the Hindoos are not equally ſo, it is chiefly to be aſcribed to their early mar-

marriages, and number of their wives, which offers them an opportunity of gratifying or extinguiſhing their paſſions as ſoon as they ariſe. To their exceſſive indulgence in certain gratifications, may probably be imputed that early decay, and premature old age ſo remarkable in both ſexes; but more eſpecially in the females. A woman at twenty-five, in this country, commonly diſplays grey hairs, with all that ſhrivelled appearance of age and decay, which in Europe ſeldom overtakes the ſex, before they have witneſſed the lapſe of half a century.

The Hindoo ſuperſtition makes no proviſion for the inſtruction of the great body of the people. The vedahs, pouranahs, and other ſacred books contain, it is ſaid, a copious ſyſtem of the moſt unexceptionable morality: and from the ſpecimens already tranſlated, this muſt in part be admitted. But the canonical books of the Hindoos, have always been regarded as a bequeſt too ſacred to be committed to vulgar hands. To the far greater part of ſociety they are ſtrictly forbidden, and are doomed to remain, in the moſt emphatic ſenſe, a *dead letter*.

In the preſent condition of the natives of Hindoſtan, this is a matter of ſmall importance; becauſe a few individuals only of the common people, are taught more than to read and write; and of the number that have made theſe attainments, hardly any have made ſufficient progreſs to qualify them to derive information from a book. Nothing can equal

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the ignorance of the great body of the people, on every ſubject relating to religion, morals or literature. Few of them can explain the genealogy, or attributes aſcribed to their deities: they do not underſtand the meaning of the ceremonies they attend; and the nature and obligations of their duty, they may obſcurely feel, but are wholly incapable to deſcribe *.

THE inconvenience of ignorance, ſo groſs and univerſal, is too obvious to require elucidation. It renders the maſs of the people not only dupes to the artifices of prieſtcraft, but ſubjects them to the impoſitions of every charlatan who pretends to ſkill in any art or ſcience whatever. The charms, incantations, and exorciſms † that here make a part of the medical art clearly ſhew, that the groſſeſt impoſitions, in other matters as well as religion, may be turned to account, among an uninformed multitude.

THE great ſuperiority of the European nations over the Aſiatics in arts, arms, and induſtry, as well as knowledge, ariſes in a more conſiderable degree, than what is commonly acknowledged, from the public proviſion that is made by the former, for the inſtruction of the great body of the people. The multitude who have few ſources of information, derive no ſmall advantage from their ſtated meetings,

* The number of deities is thirty-three crore; this may account for their being but partly known.

† A celebrated Tank near Benares is reſorted to by many, from a belief that it cures all ſuch as are poſſeſſed with devils.

for religious purpoſes, where their various duties are explained, and enforced. A ſenſe of his duty and intereſt, a conſciouſneſs of his importance, is claimed by every Briton as a ſort of prerogative which he watches with equal jealouſy and pride: the Hindoo has hardly any ſuch conceptions; or they give him but ſmall concern. Hence a conſciouſneſs of inferiority continually haunts him; he obeys with a promptitude, that ſeems rather the dictate of nature, than the reſult of reflection. In moſt of the manufactures conducted by a European, this diſpoſition of the natives is illuſtrated every day: while performing the work which they and their anceſtors have conducted for ages, they receive the directions of the European ſuperintendant, as if dictated by inſpiration; although he may, perhaps, have only the experience of a few months. The diffidence of the ſeapoy is equally remarkable; and it is, perhaps, the greateſt blemiſh in his profeſſional character. On the day of battle, when led on by his European officer, he is diſtinguiſhed by ſteadineſs and bravery, but he flies if he behold him fall; though there be greater danger in the retreat than in the battle.

Thus has the ignorance of the great body of the natives of India ſhaded their character with a diffidence and timidity, which has not only rendered them the ſlaves of their own monarchs or foreigners in every age, but has degraded them in ſome meaſure to an inferior rank among human beings. From this condition which has ſo often called forth the contempt

tempt of the brave, and the compaſſion of the wiſe, you in vain endeavour to raiſe them, while their intellects are chained down by the multiplied fetters of their degrading ſuperſtition.

THE higher orders of the Brahmins, whoſe duty it is to undertake this work, and who are perhaps alone able to effect it, are the leaſt likely to make any ſuch attempt. While their own minds are comparatively enlightened by a pure ſyſtem of natural religion, and all thoſe precepts of duty which cultivated reaſon teaches; they "detain the truth in unrighteouſneſs" and commit the people to be guided by groſſer ſyſtems of ſuperſtition and error. As if warned by the conduct of European nations, that the diſſemination of truth would tend to diminiſh their own importance and wealth, they ſeem to labour for the preſervation of ſuperſtition and ignorance with the ſame anxiety, which, if more honeſt men, they would diſcover for its deſtruction. With an intereſted foreſight they ſeem to have anticipated the alternative: and have determined to reign among uninformed dependents, rather than aſſociate on more equal terms with reſpectable men.

HENCE the ſteady countenance they give in public to doctrines which they ſurely diſbelieve; and hence the gravity with which they preſide at ceremonies which they inwardly deſpiſe. All that has been alledged by Mr Gibbon againſt the ſincerity of Cæſar or Cicero, when, as prieſts, they officiated at the abſurd

ſurd formalities of their ſuperſtition before the Roman multitude, is leſs than the truth if applied to the Brahmins. To them, the wild fictions of their theological ſyſtem appear all equally falſe; while on the part of the people they are all embraced with the moſt implicit belief *.

THERE is not in India as in Europe any claſs of men capable of detecting the encroachments of prieſtcraft, or of ſifting the baſer materials by which ſometimes it contaminates truth. Here all have at leaſt the grace of faith: none pretend to diſpute doctrines incomprehenſible from ſtudied obſcurity, or unaſcertainable from their ambiguity and folly. In this country, therefore, there may be a difference in ceremonies, and practical obſervances; but there are no ſectaries from contrariety of opinion †.

THOSE polemical diſputes in religion and politics, which in Europe ſometimes diſturb ſociety; but which always awaken curioſity, and invigorate the powers of intellect, are unheard of in India: the Hindoo ſhelters himſelf from ſuch turmoils in a total apathy, or liſtleſsneſs of thought, more reſembling the ſtillneſs

* From early prejudice, authority and example, it is poſſible, that even the learned Brahmins may believe in their ſyſtem, farther than to a European may ſeem compatible with its abſurdity.

† The inhabitants are divided into two great ſects with different external marks, but their opinions are ſo vague, that thoſe of one perſon never claſh with the tenets of another.

neſs of the grave or annihilation itſelf, than the common efforts of a rational being.

If I have in any degree been ſucceſsful in this ſketch, I have endeavoured to lay before you, of the effects of ſuperſtition upon the morals and condition of this people, you will be able to form an opinion of the ſmall quantity of intellectual furniture with which their minds are ſtored: ſhould you at the ſame time recal to your memory the ſimplicity of their dreſs, or rather the nakedneſs of their bodies, you will, no doubt, perceive abundant room for improvement in the moral and religious ſtate of many millions of our fellow ſubjects in India, as well as for advancing their external circumſtances. The learned Dr Robertſon has travelled partly over the ſame ground, but with a different view, and he may have impreſſed you with different ſentiments. The deſcription he has given of the early progreſs made by the Hindoos is extremely accurate, and guarded in its aſſertions. If applied to the higher orders of the Brahmins or the princes of Hindoſtan it is ſtrictly juſt; but nothing can be more erroneous than its application to the bulk of the people, whom the foregoing ſtrictures are meant to deſcribe.

The ſciences of India, and all the more liberal arts, are at preſent, and always have been, confined to the great and learned alone. The moral and theological knowledge poſſeſſed by a few in the higher ranks, for many ages, is as completely beyond the reach of the common

common people as if it did not exiſt: of conſequence it muſt prove of little ſervice in promoting their intereſts. The ſame thing may be affirmed of every branch of knowledge: the portion poſſeſſed by nineteen of twenty of the whole community, is comparatively nothing. To the power of habit and the influence of cuſtom alone they are conſigned for the direction of themſelves: reaſon, inert and feeble as in them it muſt prove, has little ſhare in what we juſtly regard as its peculiar province.

In ſuch circumſtances, certainly no people can be more entitled to indulgence towards their weakneſſes and errors; and there is certainly none who have ſtronger claims upon our ſympathy and tenderneſs. Britons now occupy the places of their native princes, and the bleſſings of protection, inſtruction, and encouragement in virtue, which there are too frequently withheld, providence has impoſed upon us as a ſacred duty to beſtow.

THE HINDOO SYSTEM AS IT AFFECTS SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

THE ſeparation of mankind into claſſes ſo widely diſtinguiſhed as to admit of hardly any intercourſe, or communication, tends manifeſtly to hurt their intereſt, by exciting unſocial and diſcordant paſſions: envy of their ſuperiors, among the poor; contempt and averſion, to the lower orders, among the wealthy and great. A Hindoo, of the higher orders, cannot contract an alliance by marriage with any inferior claſs to his own. The four great diviſions of rank known in Europe, are ſub-divided into fifty or ſixty ſubordinate diſtinctions, which, however imperceptible by us, are adhered to by the natives with all the obſtinacy of pride, and the antipathy of prejudice.

Two families to us apparently of exactly the ſame rank, when about to intermarry, often find much difficulty

ficulty in furmounting their mutual prejudices, even where no law interpoſes its prohibition. The puniſhment of loſing caſt which correſponds to excommunication with us, is infinitely more dreadful in its effects than it was in the dark ages in Europe. It no doubt is a ſtrong check upon the conduct: to render it a ſalutary one it ſhould only be made the puniſhment of immorality. This, however, is by no means the caſe: ſince a Hindoo, of the moſt abandoned character, may retain his rank, while an honeſt man by touching impure food, or by ſome trivial delinquency, will be degraded, and perhaps forfeit all countenance of ſociety. Morality, the offſpring of religion, is here ſeparated from it; and deemed entirely unconnected with a ſubject of which it conſtitutes ſo eſſential a part.

The parties themſelves are betrothed during their infancy, and the buſineſs is, without their conſent, concluded by the parents with great ſolemnity. A perſon verſant in their family genealogy, is employed by the parents on both ſides; frequent meetings of the relations are called, when the rank and merits of each family, are fully diſcuſſed by theſe genealogiſts. After theſe important preliminaries are adjuſted, an elegant feaſt is provided, and the agreement is finally ratified; though the parties are allowed no intercourſe whatever till the age of puberty. Symptoms of that ſtate no ſooner are diſcovered in the female, than the concluding ceremony and feaſt, correſponding to what

what the Romans termed the *deductio domum* is obſerved, and the marriage is completed.

These ceremonies can only happen, when the parties are of the ſame rank: when it is otherwiſe, an alliance would render a Hindoo, not only deteſtable to himſelf, but he and all his poſterity would be for ever debarred from all ſociety. To ſit down at a meal, with an inferior caſt, would be attended with the ſame ſerious conſequences: ſo inveterate and inſurmountable is this prejudice, that a naked Hindoo of any rank would deem himſelf execrably polluted were the firſt monarch * in Europe to approach him, at the time of his eating. While dinner is preparing, and during eating, a ſmall circle is drawn round the company, which an European, if he paſs, infallibly defiles the meal: it is thrown to the dogs, and other victuals provided, though a ſingle ana be all the treaſure of the family.

In ſo far as this ſuperſtition tends to eſtrange mankind, by creating artificial ſources of mutual averſion and diſguſt; ſo far certainly does it counteract the real intereſts of ſociety. A true or an uſeful ſyſtem would inculcate humanity and mutual love. So far from inculcating that, there is a wide and impaſſable

* I believe all kings are held as purified from their tranſgreſſions on mounting the Muſhud Laws of Menu. It is likewiſe a maxim not honoured with reference to Hindoo derivation, that the king can do nothing wrong.

diſtance between individuals of the ſame ſpecies: it would teach that they are equal, at leaſt in the ſight of the great parent of mankind, and that they ought to cheriſh ſentiments ſuitable to their ſituation as members of one univerſal family. The Chriſtian ſyſtem offers a remarkable and pointed contraſt to the doctrine of the Brahmins, in this particular; and its effects at firſt, in ſome degree, correſpond: for we are told that "the multitude of them that believed" were not divided into different claſſes, that diſdained all intercourſe and abhorred each other, but "were of one heart, of one mind, and of one ſoul." Let it not be urged that the practical effects of this artificial ſeparation of the Aſiatics, are not greatly felt in ſociety, or that a Brahmin or Rajah will as readily ſupply the wants of the poorer claſſes as he would thoſe of his own. The fact is otherwiſe; the Brahmin conſiders his order, as, in ſome meaſure, a different race of beings; and imagines that the lower ranks are incapable of the ſame ſenſibility to ſuffering: he regards them as a race whoſe feelings are deadened by the meanneſs of their intellect, and therefore not entitled to the ſame ſhare of compaſſion.

That this is the idea of the princes and civil magiſtrates throughout India, their own conduct ſufficiently evinces: hence the ſeverity of their government, the rigor of their puniſhments, and their univerſal indifference to the comfort, and even the lives of their ſubjects.

The

The averſions created among the Hindoos by their ſuperſtition, are not confined merely to ſuch as belong to the different caſts. It pervades the whole compaſs of ſociety; and is equally obſervable in all the different ſub-diviſions of the ſame general claſs. The perſons employed by Europeans as bearers, have equal antipathy to the other ſets in the ſame profeſſion as if they held their ſtations in the oppoſite extremes of ſociety. The Ooria Balaſore bearers will not ſerve in the company of ſuch as come from Patna. The caſe is the ſame with other diſtricts; as often as their inhabitants meet each other, upon the ſame ſervice, and apparently on the ſame footing, they do not eat, ſleep, or aſſociate together. The conſequences of this are obviouſly inconvenient, both to themſelves, and to Europeans.

Such diſtinctions lead not only to a ſhyneſs, and averſion in the intercourſe of ſociety; but they are apparently the cauſe of many quarrels and animoſities. The timidity and gentleneſs of the Hindoo may, in general, prevent his fighting, boxing, or ſhedding of blood; but it by no means reſtrains him from ſcolding and upbraiding his neighbours. In this reſpect they are the moſt litigious and quarrelſome of all men. Have two perſons a miſunderſtanding, let them meet in the ſtreet, and they will upbraid each other for an hour together with every foul epithet of abuſe which their imagination can ſuggeſt, or their language ſupply. A few natives engaged in one of theſe bickerings diſplay a furious geſticulation;

ticulation; a volubility of words; and coarſeneſs of expreſſion; which leave the eloquence of Billingsgate far behind. Their quarrels do not amount perhaps to a poſitive breach of the peace; being generally unaccompanied with violence; yet, as they are extremely frequent, they are a conſiderable annoyance to ſociety; for they add to the aſperity of human life; and ſtrengthen the malevolent paſſions.

Accordingly, it is found that private charity is by no means the bright part of a Hindoo's character: religious perſons, or thoſe who aſſume that character, certainly are liberally ſupplied; but this muſt be the offſpring of ſuperſtition rather than the dictate of humanity. On ſome particular occaſions, ſuch as opening a new Serai, moſt extenſive charities are diſtributed, to the multitude which is invited there. But this is mere oſtentation: neither in its principles nor in its effects does it come up to the rational idea of charity. The neceſſitous poor are more happily directed for relief to the door of an European, than to their brethren in the faith. Pagodas indeed are raiſed, Choultries built, and on great occaſions thouſands are fed by a wealthy native; but all this may be done in compliance with the intereſted advice of the Brahmins, or to gratify oſtentation; and we ought not to confound what is extorted by the fears of ſuperſtition, or what is laviſhed by vanity, with the charitable benefactions dictated by a ſound underſtanding and a benevolent heart.

ANOTHER circumſtance, in which the religious ſyſtem of this people is prejudicial to induſtry and moral virtue, and conſequently to the happineſs of ſociety, is the multitude of ceremonious rites, and trifling obſervances by which it occupies the mind: thus withdrawing the attention from the neceſſity of practiſing rectitude and preſerving integrity of heart. In almoſt every action of his life, the Hindoo is under the immediate influence of his ſuperſtition: his prayers are offerings to his gods; his purifications, and ablutions in the river; his dreſſing and eating his victuals; the objects which he touches; the companions with whom he aſſociates, are to him all intimately and equally connected with religion, and the everlaſting welfare of his ſoul. If there is any part of his conduct with which his religious ideas have no concern, it is his moral character. In "doing juſtly," or "loving mercy," he is apparently left to act as he pleaſes: but if in the moſt trivial action he violate the rites of his ſuperſtition, he is, in this life, deprived of all the comforts of ſociety, and in the next, condemned to animate the body of ſome noiſome reptile or contemptible animal.

THIS defect in the Hindoo ſyſtem, is common to it with every religion deviſed by man. An offended conſcience, or a terrified imagination, are uneaſy companions; and mankind have ever been eager to embrace the eaſieſt and cheapeſt means of appeaſing them. Whenever it has been given out to the ignorant, that the favour of heaven may be attained, by genu-

flexions,

ſlexions, prayers, ablutions, or any ceremony, they invariably have embraced them. To exerciſe contrition for offences, to break off from iniquity by repentance, to correct the whole life and converſation, and ſteadily to perſevere in virtue, is a painful and difficult taſk even to the moſt perfect: by the far greater part this is abandoned, as an unattainable object. Hence a fabric of ſuperſtitious rites is conſtructed, as compenſation to the deities for the violation of their laws.

According to the number of theſe rites, and ſtrictneſs with which they are obſerved, the rules of virtue, and the neceſſity of moral rectitude, are regarded as more or leſs indiſpenſable. The antiquity of the Hindoo ſuperſtition has conferred upon it a degree of maturity which has never been attained by any other falſe ſyſtem. Its rites and ceremonies are more numerous beyond all compariſon: they enter into every department of ſociety, and influence the whole of its manners. The Hindoo, therefore, may reſt his preſent comfort and future happineſs upon the obſervance of its rites, with more plauſibility, if not with more confidence, than the other heathen nations, who have eſtabliſhed leſs complex ſyſtems of ſuperſtition. I will not venture to aſſert that the lives of the natives are vicious and abandoned in a degree proportioned to the melancholy extent of their ſuperſtitious ſyſtem: but thoſe concerned in the police eſtabliſhment of Bengal well know the frequency of fraud, robbery, theft, and litigation.

In Europe, the peace officers are ſufficient in number and ſtrength to apprehend delinquents; whereas in this country, the whole of the ſebandy corps, a numerous eſtabliſhment, with the whole train of peons, gorairs and corabadars, are inadequate to this purpoſe. Many regiments of native infantry are ſtationed in diſtricts where the repreſſing numerous bands of marauders, or apprehending thieves, is the whole duty they perform.

What is remarkable here, becauſe intimately connected with the preſent object of our enquiries is, that the devotees or profeſſors of religion, are themſelves by far the moſt numerous, and dangerous robbers in the upper parts of India. The fakeers, inſtead of being the inſtructors of ſociety, are its greateſt peſts and depredators. It is neither knowledge nor virtue, but idleneſs, theft, and rapine, that are the leſſons to be derived from their preſence and example. They wander from the hilly country over every province, and are far more daring in their outrages than the natives of Bengal.

Upon the whole, therefore, it may be fairly concluded, that the immenſe fabric of ſuperſtition eſtabliſhed by the Brahmins contributes little or nothing, either to encourage or ſupport the virtue of its adherents; and that it may be juſtly apprehended, that not a few of that multitude of frivolous rites, have a directly oppoſite tendency.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

THE Hindoo juriſprudence, though celebrated for humanity, pays but ſmall regard to the natural rights of man: it eſtabliſhes a ſyſtem of ſlavery more complex than any yet recorded in hiſtory. The prerogatives of the magiſtrate, fortified as they are on every ſide, leave no room for national or political freedom. Pure deſpotiſm, under the veil of Theocracy, has ever been the only government in Hindoſtan.

DOMESTIC ſlavery has always been admitted here, as it was formerly in Europe; but a numerous claſs, like the Sodera, doomed to ſervility, though not actually bought and ſold, is a ſingularity in the juriſprudence of India. This claſs may be compelled to ſerve a Brahmin of the ſuperior ranks, even though he

he has not purchaſed him. The Brahmin, however, is not, even in the caſe of extreme poverty, allowed to ſerve for a ſubſiſtence, a man in the higheſt rank: what is alſo ſingular, the Sodera pays a greater intereſt for money borrowed than any other perſon. The ſon of a Sodera wife inherits only a fourth ſhare of the other ſons †; and every delinquency of this degraded claſs is puniſhed more ſeverely than the reſt: while offences againſt it are checked by ſlighter penalties. In other countries it is the aim of legiſlation to proportion puniſhment to crimes: here they deal it out according to the rank, rather than the demerit of offenders. Hence the criminal code of this country, as adminiſtered by the natives, has become as complicated in detail, as its principles are iniquitous.

Before we reach thoſe claſſes that are in abſolute ſlavery, there are intermediate degrees of ſervitude, correſponding to ſervants and apprentices in Europe. A ſtudent while learning the ſciences, performs ſervice for his teacher; and whatever gain he may acquire during his ſtudy, becomes the property of his teacher. Apprentices to the different arts are nearly on the ſame footing with ſtudents; only their aban-

* Menu, chap. 9, v. 153.

† Hindoo Laws, the Brahmin pays leaſt; the Chatree, and the other tribes more; the intereſt riſing in proportion to the degradation of the borrower.

doning the maſter without fault is puniſhed with baniſhment. The duties required from theſe perſons do not extend to certain undue ſervices, which here have not only a degree of meanneſs attached to them, but infer degradation, if performed by any other than a ſlave, or one of the loweſt claſs *. Their duties ſeem to correſpond with the *obſequium* and *reverentia*, which the Roman law exacted from the clients of agreat man to their ſuperior †.

ANOTHER ſpecies of ſervitude ſeems to reſemble the villanage of the feudal ſyſtem in Europe. When a perſon, ſays the law, peoples and cultivates the land of another man, takes a part of the crop, by way of wages; or breeding cattle, takes milk, or a part of the cattle, that ſervitude is called Bhook Bherut ‡. The celebrated Magna Charta which has by many been deemed a corner ſtone in the edifice of Britiſh liberty, but which, in fact, eſtabliſhed only the deſpotiſm of the Barons over every order of the ſtate, recognizes this ſpecies of ſervitude, when it ſtipulates in favour of wards of the Crown, that their property ſhould be reſtored "*ſine vaſto hominum et rerum.*"

WE

* Such ſervices are ſweeping the houſe, the neceſſary, or cleanſing a perſon who is ſick.

† Vide Juſtiniani Inſtit. Juris Civilis, H. T.

‡ Hindoo laws, chap. viii. ſect. 1.

We have frequently had occaſion to notice the obligation laid upon the head of a family to maintain his poor relations; ſervices are expected from ſuch neceſſitous perſons, of the nature of thoſe ſpecified. They are not ſubjected to what the law terms *undue ſervices*, the *operæ ſerviles* of the Romans, the performance of ſuch inferring a ſort of infamy.

Slaves in India are of many different deſcriptions, according to the manner in which they have been acquired. No leſs than fifteen legitimate methods of acquiring ſlaves are ſpecified in the Eaſtern code; ſome of which are peculiar to this quarter of the world.

Notwithstanding the humane proviſions juſt mentioned, many perſons either from being deſerted by their relations, or by the death of their parents, are caſt deſtitute upon the public; ſuch unfortunates, like loſt goods, become the property of the finder *. If, during a famine, a perſon has been fed by another, and his life by that means preſerved, ſuch become the property of thoſe who entertained him. Many acquiſitions of this nature might have been made by Europeans, had their cuſtoms authoriſed the practice.

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* Vide Hindoo laws, at this title.

SOMETIMES a perſon to free himſelf from the importunities of a creditor, delivers himſelf as a pledge for the debt, or in lieu of payment: this ſpecies of ſlavery is countenanced by the Hindoo as well as the Jewiſh and Roman juriſprudence. It does not, however, occur to me that the latter admitted of perſonal ſlavery on the chance of play, as is the avowed language of ſtatute in this country, as it was by conſuetudinary law in America *.

GAMING, and wagering at cock-fighting, are forbidden by the moſt ancient codes of law; it would appear therefore that this paſſion is not only prevalent in early ages, but alſo moſt violent, ſince perſonal liberty was ſometimes thrown in as the laſt ſtake. In a country where ſlavery is permitted, this unlawful act was deemed a forfeiture of liberty.

ANOTHER deſcription of ſlaves are ſuch as have become Sanyaſſee, and afterwards have renounced that holy way of life. This conduct implies not merely a dereliction of a ſtate of ſanctity and great perfection, but alſo the breach of ſolemn vows; whoever was guilty of it became puniſhable by the magiſtrate with the loſs of liberty, unleſs the delinquent were a Brahmin. In that caſe the criminal was branded in the forehead with the point of a dog's foot, and baniſhed the kingdom †.

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* Robertſon's Hiſtory of America.

† Vide Gentoo Laws, chap. , ſect. 2.

THE laſt claſs of ſlaves peculiar to the Hindoo laws, conſiſts of thoſe who, from their attachment to a ſlave girl, give up their liberty for the purpoſe of having intercourſe with her. Such ſlaves recovered their liberty on renouncing the female ſlave, and diſcontinuing the connection.

THE manumiſſion of ſlaves occupies a diſtinct title of the Brahminical inſtitution. The mode of doing this varied according to the particular claſs of ſlaves to which an individual belonged. When a maſter releaſes his ſlave, a pitcher filled with water, rice, and flowers, is placed upon the head of the ſlave by the maſter, and there broken. The contents of the pitcher fall upon the ſlave's body, while the maſter declares his intention of making him free: this ceremony confers manumiſſion. A form equally ceremonious was in uſe among the Romans *.

THE prejudices of the natives requiring every perſon to leave behind him a ſon to perform his funeral obſequies, gave riſe to another mode of manumiſſion, which is probably not unfrequent. Whoever is without a legitimate child, and hath procreated a ſon by a female ſlave, that child together with his mother become free, from the birth of the ſon.

FREE-

* Inſtitut. Juſtin. ſecund. Heinecc. ap. H. T.

Freedom was alſo conferred on ſuch ſlaves, as from affection or preſence of mind in any accident, had preſerved the life of their maſter. Slavery for debt is terminated by the extinction of that debt with intereſt.

In general, the domeſtic ſlavery of the Hindoos, is attended with leſs harſhneſs, cruelty, or exhauſting labour, than what reſults from the ſyſtem among other nations. A ſtranger is ſeldom able to diſtinguiſh between a ſlave and any other member of a family. The labour of all the common people is moderate, and their food and cloathing ſo ſimple as hardly to admit of degrees.

Even in times of calamity if a perſon ſell his ſlave girl to another againſt her conſent, he is reprehenſible, and may be fined: perhaps the whole ſyſtem as it is practiſed in Hindoſtan may be defended on principles of humanity. Scarcity here ariſes often to be famine: while the great body of the people from the benignity of the climate live almoſt without cloathing, or houſe for ſhelter. There is no proviſion for a time of difficulty: a man who has nothing but his labour to ſubſiſt upon, and perhaps does not poſſeſs the value of two days proviſion, is not ſuppoſed in diſtreſs, and is often actually happy; at leaſt he takes no thought for to-morrow. During a famine, however, ſuch perſons are relieved by a ſervitude which prevents them from falling victims to hunger. In every warm country cloathing is leſs neceſſary;

ceſſary; lodging almoſt ſuperfluous; hence the people are indolent and improvident to a degree that in your northern climes would prove fatal. Were a famine as frequent in Italy as it is in this country, the idle Lazaroni of Naples would be benefited by a ſlavery which might ſecure them againſt hunger and want, the neceſſary reſult of their improvident idleneſs.

It may therefore be queſtioned whether that zeal which burned ſo furiouſly among you for the liberation of ſlaves, was in every caſe guided by knowledge. There are at leaſt ſome inſtances in which the tender mercy of your humane reformers would be cruelty; for independent of the circumſtances peculiar, perhaps, to the natives of India, there are many perſons whoſe intellects may not be ſufficiently cultivated to guide their conduct in a ſtate of perfect freedom. As Mr. Burke has juſtly ſaid, liberty is power, and man along with the milk of human kindneſs, has alſo a good deal of the wolf in his compoſition, and till that is purged off it will be dangerous to allow him to aſſociate with ſheep, more ſo to rule over them.

Tenderness to ſlaves as well as to every creature dependent on our care, is undoubtedly one of the precepts which dignifies our benevolent religion: yet at the time when the new teſtament was written, ſlavery was far more univerſal than at preſent, while no prohibition of that ſtate appears in its pages. The reciprocal

reciprocal duties between maſter and ſervant (ſlave) are there laid down with much plainneſs, and recommended from motives very powerful; but the very regulation of ſuch a ſtate ſeems a tacit acknowledgment of its neceſſity, and infers its continuance. It is no where ſaid, Diſmiſs your ſervants and aboliſh ſlavery.

THE puniſhment of ſlaves has been guarded in the Hindoo code with the moſt anxious ſolicitude. Slender puniſhment with a bamboo ſwitch is permitted on the back, or where the leaſt injury may be felt; and in this reſpect ſlaves are put on the ſame footing with a wife, a ſon or a daughter. The Jewiſh law in the earlier periods admitted only of forty ſtripes, as the higheſt puniſhment a maſter could inflict on his ſlave; if, however, his crime was ſo atrocious as to call for the interference of the magiſtrate, the puniſhment was cruciſixion, a ſpecies of infliction peculiarly ignominious, and common to that people with the Romans, and the eaſtern nations.

SERVANT and ſlave approach in many inſtances ſo near to each other in condition that the lines of diſcrimination are not always diſcernible. Even a ſon is in many reſpects under the power of his father, and after the legal age, if he remain under the ſame roof, he foregoes the advantage of earning for himſelf. The parental power of the Romans alſo remained ſo long as the father lived; and in ſuch force, that a ſon after bearing a public office in the ſtate,

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fell again under the power of his father, whoſe authority had only intermitted during the exerciſe of his public function.

SEVERAL complete titles of Hindoo law relate to partnerſhip; which there does not imply the union of ſeveral perſons, for a mercantile purpoſe; but a community of goods, among near relations being together under a father or elder brother. A father while he lives is repreſentative and maſter of the family. The heritable property of his anceſtors, and what he has himſelf acquired are under his management, but with different reſtrictions. The former part of the eſtate he is not allowed to alienate without the conſent of his children: of the latter he has the full diſpoſal.

THE ſame reverence and ſubmiſſion which the law ordains to a father, is after his death to be paid by the different members of the family to an elder brother, who then becomes the manager of the whole. If ſons claim a diviſion, that diviſion muſt be made in terms of law; and it would appear from ſome ancient records that even a father could not refuſe this; as appears from the hiſtory of the prodigal ſon, as well as the inſtitutions of Menu.

OF THE ANTIQUITY OF THE HINDOO SCRIPTURES.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

It has of late become a faſhionable doctrine to aſcribe a very high antiquity to the Hindoo Scriptures; to find difficulties in the Moſaic account of the creation; and to feel an affected concern for its incompatibility with authentic records of the moſt ancient nations.

M. de Voltaire imagines that he has expoſed the Jewiſh hiſtory to a ſtrong degree of ridicule, becauſe it repreſents the creation of the world as having happened only ſeven thouſand years ago, while the Chineſe trace it back to a far greater number of millions. Mr Halhed, the tranſlator of a Perſian compilation of Hindoo laws, deſcribes the impreſſion which the antiquity of theſe books make upon his mind; and the difficulty he finds of bring-

ing

ing down his imagination " to the obedience of " faith *."

In a word, our antiquarians are ever in danger of picking up from the immenſe heap of faithful manuſcripts at Benares, ſome direful fragment that may overturn the chronology of the Bible: like the Canon Recupero, when he examined the ſtratified lava of Mount Etna, " they feel the writings of Moſes a dead " weight upon them." It is to be regretted, that in the ſevere drudgery of turning over ſo many volumes of wiſdom, they ſhould be ſo often diſturbed by parchments with claims of antiquity ſo ſtrong, that they effectually flagger *reaſon*, and alarm them into unbelief.

Mr Halhed thus laments, " that though we " may come to the peruſal of their records, armed " with every argument, and fortified even to preju- " dice againſt the admiſſion of their pretenſions, at " the ſame time placing the moſt implicit reliance " upon the Moſaic chronology as generally receiv- " ed, yet their plauſible accounts of theſe remote " ages, and their undeviating confidence in their " own aſſertions, never can fail to make ſome im- " preſſion upon us, in proportion as we gain a " nearer inſight into them."

As

* This gentleman has ſince found no difficulty in believing the wild abſurdities of the Prophet Brothers.

As the Engliſh reader may not poſſibly be armed with every argument, nor ſo completely fortified in European prejudices as Mr Halhed, it would be unfair to expoſe him to the whole force of that plauſibility which proved ſo irreſiſtible to that gentleman. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that the Hindoos reckon the duration of the world by four *jogues*, or ages, containing together above eight millions of years.

The firſt age, or that of purity *(Suttee jogue,)* laſted 3,200,000 years. In this period, which ſeems to correſpond with the golden age of our European poets*; men practiſed their duty without the compulſion of law; their life extended to an hundred thouſand years; and their ſtature was twenty-one cubits.

In the ſecond, or *Tirtah jogue*, one third of the human race became reprobate, and the period of life was reduced to ten thouſand years, while that of the age itſelf was contracted to two millions four hundred thouſand years.

In the third age, the depraved part of the ſpecies amounted to one half, and the duration of life only to a thouſand years. This age laſted 1,600,000 years.

Lastly

* Sponte ſine lege juſtitiam colebant.
Ovid. Metam.

LASTLY came the *Kalli jogue*, or preſent æra, which is ſuppoſed to ſubſiſt only 400,000 years, of which about 5000 are already elapſed. In this age the depravity of men became univerſal, and their lives were reduced to the term of 100 years.

SUCH is the "plauſibility" of the Hindoo account, which made ſo deep an impreſſion upon Mr Halhed. "Computation," ſays he, "is loſt; and "conjecture overwhelmed in the attempt to adjuſt "ſuch aſtoniſhing ſpaces of time to our confined "notions of the world's epoch: to ſuch an antiqui- "ty the Moſaic creation is but as yeſterday; and to "ſuch ages, the life of Methuſelah is but a ſpan!"

OUR "confined notions" reſpecting the duration of the world, are no rules for other nations in forming their legends, no more than ſober hiſtory is the ſtandard for writing romance. Happily there is no neceſſity for reconciling them; otherwiſe the Hindoo chronology might be found equally conſonant to ours as twenty-one cubits are to the length of a man.

NATIONS are as much intereſted in the dignity of their origin as individuals: high antiquity is univerſally believed to confer on both a luſtre, which the leſs it is genuine, is the more eaſily counterfeited. Even in Europe almoſt every nation carries its origin back to remote periods of darkneſs and fiction; although there, the gratification of vanity is limited by the prevalence of knowledge and of ſober criticiſm.

Were

Were the early annals of Egypt or Ethiopia diſcovered, their limited knowledge would probably be found to bear them out in pretenſions as groſs as thoſe of the Hindoos. We know that in China, where this kind of arrogance is not checked by any incredulity among the people, that ſyſtem of chronology reaches far beyond that of the Brahmins, where dates muſt appear to theſe people as of "yeſterday, and their lives as a ſpan." It is ſufficient, therefore, to eſtabliſh the authority of the Brahminical ſcriptures, that they accord with the ſuggeſtions of human vanity in a rude and uninformed nation. Their gigantic ſize and their longevity bear an exact conformity with fictions and traditions of every early people. Theſe tales of the nurſes are gradually ſyſtematiſed, and tranſcribed into the records of the nation; yet they are ſtill tales though they may happen to be repeated with wonder by a different deſcription of *old women*.

"MERE human reaſon," ſays this tranſlator, "upon conſideration of the preſent contracted meaſure of mortality, can no more reconcile to itſelf, the idea of patriarchal, than of Brahminical longevity:" and "when the line of implicit faith is once extended, we can never aſcertain the preciſe limits beyond which it muſt not paſs."

THE facility with which this gentleman on ſome late occaſions, has extended the "line of implicit faith," has rendered it doubtful whether, with him it

it has any limits at all. According to him the great ſource of credibility to the Brahminical writings ariſes from the undeviating confidence in their own aſſertions. To many, confident aſſertions will appear a very ſingular and precarious teſt of truth, however ſtrictly Mr. Halhed may have demeaned himſelf by ſuch a rule. Munnoo, it would ſeem, one of the moſt authoritative of the Hindoo ſages, has himſelf affixed a date to his own code. "When ten thouſand and "ten years of the Suttee jogue were paſt, on the night "of the full moon, in the month Bhadun, I Mun-"noo, at the command of Brahma, finiſhed this "ſhaſter, that ſpeaks of mens' duty, of juſtice, and "of religion ever inſtructive." It is ſufficient then, it would ſeem to command the belief of Mr. Halhed, that an impoſtor confidently aſſerts, that he has communicated with the deity on the night of the full moon.

The next aſſerter of the antiquity of theſe ſcriptures is Jage-Bulk, who ſays, "In the Tirtah Jogue, "when ninety-five years were paſt, "in the night of Sawun, on the moon's increaſe, "on the day of Mercury, I finiſhed the treatiſe called "Jage-Bulk, which ſets forth the offices of religion, "and alſo "informs men of the duties of the magiſtrate."

"WHAT period," ſays the traſlator, "ſhall we "poſſibly aſſign to thoſe writings, if we diſallow "the authorities here quoted. If they are falſe, "there muſt have been a time when the impoſition "would

"would have been too palpable to have paſſed upon "mankind, and where the concurrent teſtimony of "the whole world muſt have riſen in judgment a-"gainſt it."

THE impoſition running through the whole of theſe books, as well as their dates, may at firſt ſight ſeem too palpable to paſs upon mankind; and certainly had they been either capable or diſpoſed to liſten to rational evidence, they could never have been received as any thing elſe than the impoſitions of craft upon ignorance. But the very reverſe of this is the actual ſtate of nations in early times. Their ancient narratives are all marvellous, and all implicitly believed, and it is not wonderful that books, which contain either ſome prodigy or groſs fiction in every page, ſhould alſo aſſume a romantic claim to antiquity. The ſtyle is uniform in each part; and well ſuited to gratify a paſſion for the marvellous, and to gain upon the unſuſpecting credulity of a ſimple people. That the Hindoos ſhould receive theſe conſecrated fictions, is what we ſhould expect from human nature: and had their early records been entirely diveſted of every romantic abſurdity, they would on that account only have diſplayed ſomething new in the annals of prieſtcraft and ſuperſtition.

WE are further acquainted that, at the beginning of the Kalli jogue, Shukeh Diew, a modern author according to Hindoo records, compoſed a work, conſiſting

ſiſting of three thouſand and twenty chapters, and detailing the hiſtory of India during the three preceding Jogues; the ſucceſſion of its Rajahs and the duration of their reigns. "What *ſhall we ſay*," continues Mr. Halhed "to a work *compoſed four* "thouſand years ago, and *from thence tracing* "mankind upwards for ſeveral *millions of years?*" If ſuch a book exiſts its contents may *fall within the* extended line of Mr. Halhed's implicit faith, and may be well ſuited to his intellect; though to other minds it will probably convey but a ſmall portion of information *.

When we turn from the date of the Hindoo creation, and conſider the account given of that great event, we look in vain for that conciſeneſs and ſublimity which has been admired in the narrative of the Jewiſh lawgiver even by the Heathens themſelves. "God ſaid, let there be light; and there was light," is an example of the ſublime quoted by the celebrated Longinus, who has long held a diſtinguiſhed rank as a judge of compoſition. In the work of Menu every thought is frittered down, by an affected ſubtilty, and a too minute particularity of deſcription: He deſcribes the Spirit of God as moving upon the water, almoſt in the words of Moſes; and the chaotic darkneſs from which the creation was called forth bears a ſtrong ſimilarity in both ſyſtems. The former, however,

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* Credat Judæus Appella, non ego.

ever, not only loſes its dignity, but even gravity, when after the inferior deities, ſages, and other great perſonages are brought into exiſtence, it ſpecifies the creation "of ſmall and large reptiles, moths, lice, fleas, and common flies, and every biting gnat."

THE time employed by the divine agency in the Hindoo creation is not ſpecified; but as the ſyſtem comprehends no leſs than fourteen ſpheres or worlds, ſix above and ſeven below that which we inhabit, human notions would lead us to conceive greater ſpace neceſſary for its completion, had not the ſame books themſelves informed us, "that there are numberleſs creations, and deſtructions of worlds; and that the being ſupremely exalted, performs all this with as much eaſe as if in ſport, again and again, for the ſake of conferring happineſs *."

THIS paſſage alludes to a notion more clearly expreſſed elſewhere; that after the four jogues are completed, another creation will commence, enduring for the ſame number of ages. The ſpheres or worlds above ours are the regions deſtined for the reward of good men, according to their different attainments in holineſs. The Swergeh, or firſt paradiſe is the general receptacle for all ſuch as have merited a removal from this lower earth: a ſecond place, the Mahun is the abode of Fakeers, and ſuch perſons

* Menu Inſtit. chap. 1, v. 80.

perſons as by dint of prayer, have attained a more than ordinary degree of ſanctity. The third heaven, Junneh is alſo the reſidence of pious ſouls; a glorious ſphere, beyond which ſouls are ſuppoſed not to paſs without ſome uncommon merit and qualifications *. The other celeſtial manſions, up to the Suttee (which is higheſt of all, and the reſidence of Brahma, with a few particular favourites,) are inhabited by ſuch as have all their lives performed ſome wonderful penance, or died martyrs for their religion. The higheſt prize of all in this great lottery of life, is reſerved for thoſe who have never in their whole life uttered a fiction; and to thoſe women who have burned themſelves on the funeral pile of their huſbands.

THE Hindoo ſyſtem with all its exuberance of bliſs is not more fertile in rewards than puniſhments; beſides thoſe numberleſs tranſmigrations to which it ſubjects ſinners, there are twenty-one different hells, or regions of poſitive torture, where men are conſigned for puniſhment according to their ſuppoſed criminality. None of theſe puniſhments are however eternal; but a redemption from them is admitted, as well as a ſtate of final beatitude by their abſorption into the ſupreme being.

THESE ideas of the creation are received by the Hindoos literally as they are expreſſed; and they conſtitute

* Vide Introd. Gentoo Laws, by Mr. Halhed.

conſtitute an introductory chapter to their religious and civil code; which muſt prove of high utility if it reconcile each of the claſſes to its ſtation in ſociety. Brahma, the immediate agent of the creation, is declared to have formed the Brahmin from his mouth; and the duties enjoined him, are not merely ſymbolically repreſented by that organ from which he is produced, but to pray, to read, and to inſtruct, are believed to be qualifications, the unavoidable reſult of his formation from that organ.

THE Katri by being formed from the arms is qualified with ſtrength to fight and to govern. The Vayſe proceeding from the belly are qualified to produce the nouriſhment of ſociety, by exerciſing the vocations of agriculture and traffic. The Sodra, being formed from the feet, is doomed to a ſtate of ſubjection, in which his duty conſiſts of labour, in the ſervice of the other tribes.

IT is the regret of a benevolent writer, that ſo many millions of the human race are born to no other inheritance but ſlavery; his feelings would have been ſtill more deeply wounded had he beheld a ſociety the greater part of which was doomed to inherit infamy as well as ſlavery.

THE Hindoo ſyſtem, beſides theſe four great tribes juſt mentioned, ſanctions a fifth, or adventitious claſs, that ariſes from illegitimate connections between the other tribes. This numerous portion of the people, which

which conducts the mechanic trades and petty traffic, is held infamous as well as ſervile. All thē tribes of Burrun Sunker are believed to be contaminated by the guilt of their parents, and the tradeſmen of India are deemed infamous as well as poor. The law makes a diſtinction in the crimes and puniſhment of all the claſſes; an injury to one order is in ſome caſes capital; while the ſame offence would, if committed againſt an inferior, be amerced by a trifling

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Allahabad, July 1799.

Of the various modes of appeaſing the irritated conſcience of offenders, that of *penances* and *expiations* has been moſt univerſal among ſuperſtitious nations; and from the extent to which they have carried the doctrine, perhaps no invention of prieſtcraft has been more injurious to the intereſts of morality. In no ſtage of ſociety, not even in the higheſt degrees of virtue and information which it has ever attained, are men beyond the reach of remorſe, ſince they are always liable to miſconduct and error; in a rude age, however, when, from the imperfection of government, crimes and irregularities are more frequent, and when the character of deity and all that pertains to hereafter, are viewed through the awful obſcurity of ignorance, the powers of conſcience are aided by imagination, and its upbraidings are beyond endurance.

In

In ſuch caſes relief is graſped at without enquiry into the aptitude of the means; and to reſtore a man to peace of mind, and ſelf eſtimation, if it can be done without injuring virtue, is one of the beſt offices of a religious inſtructor.

Penances and expiations are thoſe external acts appointed by the prieſthood, to appeaſe conſcience under the notion of removing moral turpitude. They are founded on a principle univerſal in human nature; and in every country have, in a greater or leſs degree, become an engine of power to the prieſthood. In ages of ignorance men are leaſt able to detect encroachments of this nature: their ſuperſtitious fears ſeem rather to invite them: hence hiſtory has always exhibited this branch of eccleſiaſtical power and emolument, bearing a ſtrict proportion to the ignorance of the people.

Acts naturally indifferent are put on the ſame footing with immoralities; eating certain articles of food, drinking certain liquors, or touching certain objects, are declared forfeitures, and are expiated by penance as immoral conduct. In moſt of the Aſiatic governments, where the prieſthood have acquired great influence, the doctrine of penances and expiations has been extended to almoſt every action and ſituation of life; and the people have been gradually ſubjected to a juriſdiction as unlimited as their own ſuperſtitious imaginations, and provided with puniſhments as various as their fears.

The

The Jewiſh inſtitutions have been preſerved to us in records more authentic than thoſe of any other ancient people. By them we learn in what various caſes a man was rendered impure, whether from guilt, or from circumſtances accidental, or by actions indifferent. But whatever were the means by which guilt or impurity was contracted, expiation was indiſpenſable, before the ſinner could be admitted into ſociety, partake in any religious ſolemnity, or even eat or drink with his brethren *. Theſe laws were guarded by puniſhments ſo ſevere, as enſured their obſervance; diſobedience in certain caſes incurred the ſame puniſhment as murder: "The "man that ſhall be unclean and ſhall not purify "himſelf, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among the "congregation."

A large portion of the Hindoo Scripture is appropriated to the ſubject of expiation. The great ſyſtem of Metempſychoſis itſelf, as laid down in the ſacred books, makes a part of this doctrine †. The ſufferings endured by undergoing a certain number of tranſmigrations, are in no inſtance declared eternal: "when the taint ariſing from guilt is removed,"

* Numb. chap. xix. v. 22. The delinquent was not merely excluded from ſociety; "but whatſoever the unclean perſon toucheth ſhall be unclean, and the ſoul that toucheth it ſhall be *alſo* unclean."

† Vide Inſtitut. of Menu, chap. xii. paſſim.

ed," the ſoul again recovers beatitude; and after its purification is complete, it is abſorbed into the univerſal ſpirit *.

THE machinery of the Hindoo ſyſtem is awful and tremendous; and had it been uniformly employed in the defence of virtue, its effects muſt always have been conſiderable, as well as very ſalutary.

THEIR regions of torment are various, and in great number; and the pains ſuffered in them are proportioned to the ſuppoſed guilt of the offenders; who "as often as they repeat criminal acts are "doomed to pains more and more intenſe, in deſpi- "cable forms upon this earth. They ſhall firſt have "a ſenſation of agony in Tamiſra †, or utter dark- "neſs, and in other ſeats of horror. Multifarious "tortures await them: they ſhall be mangled by "ravens and owls; and ſwallow cakes boiling hot; "ſhall walk over inflamed ſands; and ſhall feel the "pangs of being baked like the veſſels of a "potter ‡."

EVEN theſe regions of darkneſs are not altogether inacceſſible to hope, and the criminal in the abyſs of

* Ibid, v. 22.

† One of the hells of the Hindoos

‡ Chap. xii. v. 74, et infra.

torment might look forward to a period in which his guilt would be expiated, and when the gates of bliſs would be no longer ſhut againſt him. Eternal puniſhments ſeem, to the Hindoo, injurious to virtue, and repugnant to mercy.

So far may the Hindoo ſyſtem of expiation be regarded as abetting the cauſe of virtue, but there are other parts of it that ſeem calculated to ſubvert the moral ſenſe, and obliterate the diſtinction between right and wrong. The claſſification of crimes totally unequal, and the ſubjecting actions indifferent, to the ſame puniſhment as offences the moſt injurious to ſociety, certainly tends to weaken the moral faculty. It is a maxim in legiſlation, that law ſhould not counteract morals, and that the crimes of the ſtatute-book ſhould correſpond with the dictates of conſcience; but in a ſyſtem erected by intereſted craft upon ignorance, we are not to expect that this rule ſhall be ſtrictly adhered to.

We find accordingly in the Braminical code, crimes of the moſt different degrees of turpitude claſſed together, without any regard to proportion in their puniſhment. Thus, "forgetting texts of ſcripture," is claſſed with "perjury;" eating things forbidden, to "killing a friend:" inceſt and adultery, are compared to ſlaying a bull or a cow †; drinking for-

† Menu, chap. xii. v. 55, &c.

forbidden liquor, to killing a brahmin. In ſeveral inſtances, actions highly meritorious according to our notions, are put on the ſame footing with a conduct implying great infamy. "Working in mines of any ſort, engaging in dykes, bridges, or other great mechanical works," is claſſed with "ſubſiſting by the harlotry of a wife, and preparing charms to deſtroy the innocent †."

In order to account for this artificial and factitious ſyſtem of morality, it muſt be remembered, that the more crimes are multiplied, the oftener muſt the ſinner have recourſe to expiation, and the prieſts in conſequence, muſt profit more frequently by his abſolution. "Penance," ſays the ſacred text, "muſt invariably be performed for the ſake of ex-"piation; for they who have not expiated their "ſins, will again ſpring to birth with diſgraceful "marks." This paſſage ſeems to allude to a very ſingular invention of the Brahmins to multiply the number of caſes in which expiation became neceſſary; they encourage the belief that every corporeal mark or infirmity at birth, muſt have been occaſioned by ſome ſin committed either by the parents themſelves, or the perſon himſelf in a former ſtate; and in either caſe expiation became neceſſary before he could be admitted to the comforts of ſociety.

"If

† Ibid, v. 64. It is ſcarcely poſſible to invent a ſyſtem more repugnant to public improvement.

" If a twice born man by the will of God in this " world, or from his natural birth, have any cor- " poreal mark of an expiable ſin committed in this " or a former ſtate, he muſt hold no intercourſe " with the virtuous, while his penance remains un- " performed." The Jews whoſe ſyſtem of crimes and expiations was nearly as complex as that of the Hindoos, and in ſome particulars bears a ſtrict reſemblance to it, ſeem to have entertained this ſtrange opinion. " Was it *this man*, or his parents that " ſinned, that he was *born* blind?" is a queſtion implying this belief. The leproſy, which was once more frequent among that people than at preſent muſt have been regarded as proceeding from ſome moral turpitude; at leaſt the expiations, after it was declared to be removed, were equally numerous and expenſive as thoſe required for the removal of guilt *.

But if farther proof of the diſpoſition of the Brahmins to multiply crimes, and the neceſſity of expiating them were needed, ſufficient would be found in their extenſion of this mode of diſcipline to involuntary offences †. Although no axiom in morals

* Theſe marks were various, and expreſſive of the crimes, committed by the perſon who bore them. " The ſtealer of a lamp, ſuffered blindneſs; the drinker of ſpirits, black teeth; the ſlayer of a Brahmin, maraſmus; the violator of his gooru's bed, deformity in the generative organs."

† See chap. xiv. paſſim.

tals can be clearer, than that intention alone conſtitutes guilt, and ſo far only as evil intention can be ſhewn, ſo far is criminality eſtabliſhed; the man, however, who has unintentionally occaſioned the death of another, feels an uneaſineſs ſomewhat reſembling remorſe: he feels deſirous to make compenſation even for unintended miſchief. Upon this feeling the doctrine of expiating involuntary offences has been founded; penances of great ſeverity have been ordained for them. "If a Brahmin, ſays Menu, "have killed a man of the ſacerdotal claſs, without "malice, he muſt make a hut in a foreſt, and dwell "in it twelve whole years, ſubſiſting on alms, for "the purification of his ſoul. If the ſlayer be a "king, he may perform ſacrifices with preſents of "great value: if a perſon of wealth has committed "this offence, he may give all his property to ſome "Brahmin learned in the Veda §."

INVOLUNTARY guilt being thus eſtabliſhed, and the very touching of a great proportion of the ſurrounding objects incurring defilement, as well as killing any ſenſitive animal, from an inſect to a camel, the Hindoo muſt be in perpetual bondage; that he is haunted with continual apprehenſions of tranſgreſſing

§ Chap. vii. v. 73, &c. The Jewiſh prieſts hold upon this ſubject a ſimilar doctrine. A city of refuge protected the killer; but if found beyond its limits he might be puniſhed.

greſſing againſt ſome article of this vaſt ſyſtem of criminal law, is not to be wondered at. Sins of omiſſion, as well as poſitive offences, equally expoſe him to the expiating diſcipline of the prieſts; and that he eſcapes a ſingle day of his life from incurring inflictions, is probably more owing to their forbearance, than to his own purity.

Armed with this mighty engine of oppreſſion, the Brahmins, upon a near view, will be found, perhaps, to exerciſe their authority with no great rigour. Empowered to inflict ſuch a number of penalties, which all incur, whether they are lazy or idle, awake or aſleep, there ſeem but few inſtances of cruelty or even hardſhip ſuſtained by the exerciſe of a power thus unbounded. The truth is, the ſuperſtition of the people is ſo great that they willingly undergo any penance: it equals, and ſometimes ſurpaſſes all that the prieſthood exacts from it. After having ſatisfied all the rigid demands of the ſyſtem of expiation, the pious Hindoo often invents new privations and auſterities for the exerciſe of his patience, and the enlivening of his piety. Of this kind are the pilgrimages he undertakes to places of peculiar ſanctity; the vows of abſtinence and mortification which he regularly diſcharges, and the frequent corporeal pains which he inflicts upon himſelf.

The place from which I now write, is celebrated for the ſanctity which is ſuppoſed to be conferred on ſuch

ſuch as bathe at the junction of the united ſtreams of the Ganges and the Jumna. Ten or twelve thouſand pilgrims may be ſeen at once crowding to the banks; their admiſſion to the ſacred ſpot is purchaſed by a certain ſum for each man, paid to the Brahmins. Between the piety and the avarice of the Hindoo, there is ſometimes a great ſtruggle; theſe two paſſions ſeem to occupy his whole ſoul. This year the Brahmins inſiſted on a certain ſum, which the pilgrims for a while refuſing to pay, one of the former made a feint of cutting his hand. This meaſure, the efficacy of which to us is not very obvious, had at once the deſired effect: all agreed inſtantly to pay down the ſum demanded, convinced that if blood had been drawn from that ſacred perſon, the whole crowd of pilgrims muſt have ſuffered a ſentence of damnation, which ages of ſuffering could not have reverſed.

Another claſs of voluntary penances, for the ſake of advancing the ſanctity of the performer, are thoſe numerous auſterities that are preſcribed in conſequence of vows. If a perſon becomes unfortunate, and on this account loſes that conſequence which he formerly held in ſociety, he conſoles his vanity by turning ſaint; and on that ſcore draws to himſelf a greater degree of conſideration than perhaps he enjoyed as a man of rank and fortune. In purſuit of this object, thouſands make vows of auſterity, and renounce the world. Clothed in ſkins, they wander as mendicants, or retire to the foreſts, and ſubſiſt on wild

wild fruits, or the roots of plants. When ſuch a reſolution is taken, it is irrevocable; the ſevereſt puniſhments are inflicted on ſuch as retract their vows, or return to ſociety.

THESE hermits are conſidered as actually dead; their property is divided among their relations, and the funeral obſequies are performed to their manes. In ancient times, the age of forty or fifty years was the period of taking this vow; the diſcharge of which is ſuppoſed to confer the higheſt degree of perfection to which in this life a man could attain. The bodily pains inflicted on themſelves by the anchorets of this country, from their whimſical nature and their ſeverity, are at once repugnant to reaſon, and beyond the limits of credibility. They only who have ſeen the horrid ſcenes diſplayed at certain Hindoo feſtivals, will be able to form a conception of the extravagances which ſuperſtition can dictate, or of the ſufferings which fortitude can endure.

RE-

RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE JEWISH AND HINDOO RITES.

Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

THAT there ſhould be a reſemblance in the laws and uſages of nations in a ſimilar ſtate of improvement, is what we are led to expect equally by hiſtory, and common reflection. The ſingular coincidence between many of the Hindoo cuſtoms and thoſe of the Jews recurs too frequently, and with too cloſe a reſemblance to have ariſen ſolely from this cauſe. If men originally ſprung from one common ſtock, and we are told that they did; their primitive inſtitutions, would migrate along with every tribe at its removal from the parent country. The farther, therefore, that men are traced, and the nearer you approach to the original ſtock, the greater ſimilarity muſt be found in their cuſtoms. The Hindoo ſcriptures and our own, are the moſt ancient records yet known: the laws in each code are in ſome caſes exactly the

ſame; and in many they are ſimilar: were other records ſtill more ancient to be diſcovered 'tis poſſible that theſe would diſplay a ſtill ſtronger reſemblance, till we at laſt arrived at the hiſtory of one primary and individual people.

THE doctrine of the tranſmigration ſeems to have been embraced by the diſciples of Moſes, and of Menu; and as this was conſidered as a ſtate of expiation, the prayers of a man's poſterity were believed to operate in behalf of their ſuffering anceſtor, and to render his purification more expeditious and leſs painful. Hence the cuſtom of adopting a child was practiſed, with a view to this very end perhaps, in both countries. The duty of leaving a ſon is ſo ſacred and indiſpenſible among the Hindoos, that a ſecond and even a third wife is allowed, if there was no child by the firſt *. Poligamy was practiſed by the Jews, and alſo concubinage, but this is too common a cuſtom among the eaſtern nations to found any argument of their connection.

THE neceſſity of leaving a ſon to perform theſe duties, dictated that cuſtom of procreating a child on the widow of a deceaſed brother who had left no offspring. This connection is only permitted in the Hindoo ſyſtem, not enjoined; and muſt ceaſe as ſoon as

* And the maid (Eſther) was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, adopted for his own daughter. Eſt. ii. 7.

as the object is obtained *: In the Jewiſh law the duty of *raiſing up ſeed* to a deceaſed brother, is matter of poſitive precept, the neglect of which ſeems to have incurred no ſmall degree of infamy †.

THE ceremonies at marriage are extremely various and complex in the Hindoo code, which permits eight different forms, all affecting the rank of the parties, and their progeny differently. In ſome of theſe forms the contract is made, by giving preſents to the parents of the bride, a practice which ſeems to be a remnant of the cuſtom of purchaſing wives, ſo frequent among rude nations ‡. This practice obtained among the Jews in the early periods of their hiſtory, when we find Jacob ſerving for both the daughters of Laban.

THE intermarriages of different ranks are permitted in the Hindoo ſyſtem; but ſuch are always deemed diſgraceful, and vitiate the offspring which is degraded. The tribes of the Jews are kept diſtinct, as well as the caſts of the Indians, the daughters

* He who laſciviouſly dallies with the widow of a deceaſed brother, though ſhe be legally married to him is diſgraced. Ch. iii. v. 173.

† Then ſhall his brother's widow looſe the ſhoe from off his foot, and ſpit in his face; and ſhall anſwer and ſay, ſo ſhall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's houſe. Deut. xxv. 9.

‡ Vide Neh. xii. 28.

ters of Zetophehad are ordered to marry in their own tribe; and prieſts who could not ſhew their genealogy, or who married a ſtranger were conſidered as polluted, and were degraded from their office *.

THE laws of the ſage Menu, like thoſe of greater part of the eaſtern legiſlators, ſpeak of the female ſex in terms, that according to European notions would be deemed highly diſreſpectful; and what does no great credit to his conſiſtency, he requires from the ſex a conduct more correct and decorous, than can be hoped for from an ordinary ſhare of judgment and circumſpection. When legiſlating for the ſex, this oracle obſerves, that "Through their "paſſion for men, their mutable temper, their want "of ſettled affection, and their perverſe nature, let "them be guarded in this world ever ſo well, they "ſoon become alienated from their huſbands."— "Women have no buſineſs with the Veda; thus is "the law fully ſettled: having therefore no evidence "of law, and no knowledge of expiatory texts, ſin- "ful women muſt be as foul as falſehood itſelf †."

YET with all theſe bad qualities they are expected to remain conſtant in their own houſe, and are not even "to laugh without covering the face with a "veil,

* Among the early Romans marriage was contracted in three ways; coemptione, confariatione, et uſu.

† Menu, ch. ix. v. 15, &c.

"veil. Unſeaſonable ſleep, rambling abroad, dwel-
"ling in the houſe of another, are declared crimes
"which bring infamy upon their huſbands." They are declared to be always in a ſtate of dependence or pupilage; firſt in the houſe of their father, afterwards in that of the huſband, and laſtly in that of their ſon.

BARRENNESS, bearing female children, being diſeaſed are deemed ſufficient cauſes of ſuperſeding a wife and marrying another. So little confidence do they place in their virtue, that ſpeaking to, or ſitting upon the ſame couch with a man are declared to be adulterous acts, and ſeverely puniſhable; actual adultery if committed with a perſon of birth incurs death.

BARRENNESS in a married woman is conſidered as a great misfortune, equally in the Jewiſh and Indian code; in both, the eldeſt ſon obtained certain rights by the priority of his birth. In the Jewiſh law the firſt born was conſidered as ſacred, and was redeemed. The Hindoo philoſopher grants him the ſole right of invoking the gods, and offering oblations to the manes in the Sradha. A double portion of the inheritance is declared the legal right of the firſt born in both ſyſtems; but among the Hindoos there are many modifications of this rule, according to the virtue of the ſon, or the rank of his mother.

THAT

THAT whole title of law relating to defilement, and the means of removing it bears a ſtrong ſimilarity among both nations: and this part of their ſuperſtition ſeems of every other to have made the moſt indelible impreſſion upon the minds of both. The modern Jews are as punctilious with regard to the killing of meat, its kind, the perſon who dreſſes it, as their anceſtors were two thouſand years ago. The firſt teachers of chriſtianity, who intended to promulgate a ſyſtem of morals inſtead of ritual obſervances, had great difficulty in recalling their attention from the obſervance of days and aſcetic devotion. It ſeems to have been of all things the moſt difficult to perſuade them that true holineſs conſiſted not of "meats nor of drinks," but "in righteouſneſs, peace and joy." Their obſtinate adherence to theſe particulars ſeems the very circumſtance which every where preſerves the Jews a diſtinct people, though diſperſed throughout every part of the world. When the Hindoos are removed, as at Aſtracan, they remain equally ſecluded and diſtinct.

IN both ſyſtems all forbidden meats induce impurity. All fleſh meat is rigidly forbidden the Hindoo as his ordinary food, but ſuch animals as are declared clean, (which are nearly the ſame with thoſe permitted to the Jews) might be legally killed for

ſacrifice;

ſacriſice; and on that occaſion they might be eaten meritoriouſly *

OTHER objects of defilement, ſuch as a dead body, an unclean perſon, a woman after childbirth, in her menſes, a man after an impure dream, with various others are exactly the ſame, and the methods of purification are alſo ſimilar.

WHAT we are leaſt prepared to expect in the hiſtory of the two countries, at preſent under our review, is a reſemblance in their worſhip and religious ceremonies. The great and peculiar object of the Jewiſh ſyſtem was to inculcate monotheiſm, and to eſtabliſh a nation with ſelect rites; and here it muſt be acknowledged that the notions taught by the Hindoo ſyſtem fall infinitely ſhort of that ſublimity of truth and dignity which the Jewiſh ſcriptures inculcate upon this ſubject.

THE Supreme Being is depicted in the former, with vague and indiſtinct attributes: the actions imputed to him in the creation and government of the world, are often puerile and abſurd; and worſhip is never mentioned as excluſively due to him. Anceſtors and deities are the objects of daily reverence in the ſacrifices of the Hindoo, but he has no inſtitution in honour

* On a ſolemn offering to a gueſt, at ſacrifice, and in holy rites to the manes or the gods; but on theſe occaſions only, may cattle be ſlain: this law Menu enacted. Ch. v. v. 41.

honour of one Supreme God, entitled to the exclusive homage of mankind.

After marking this eſſential difference it is juſt to obſerve, that the liturgies of both ſyſtems bear in other particulars a cloſe reſemblance. There are ſimilar altars, the ſame incenſe and offerings, and the reſpect of the worſhipper at both was expreſſed by ſimilar acts. The Jews had in the ſervice of their temple dancing and ſinging women, who had a regular maintenance from the public funds of the church *. There is the ſame eſtabliſhment at preſent in all the conſiderable temples of the Deccan †.

The ſervants of the altar, were, in each country, choſen only from one particular tribe, which was inveſted with high rank, and ſupported by a fixed contribution from the reſt of the inhabitants. Certain particular acts were neceſſary before a perſon of the prieſtly rank could perform any religious office. Inveſtiture with the ſacred ſtring, a girdle and a ſtaff on his ſixteenth year, was neceſſary to the conſecration of a prieſt. The twice-born all underwent at certain periods a ſpecies of conſecration which conſtituted their *ſecond* birth; and in conſequence of it they enjoyed

* And all Iſrael in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the ſingers, and the porter every day his portion. Neh. xii. 47.

† Menu, ch. ii. v. 38, et infra. Exod. xxxi. 10.

enjoyed peculiar privileges ever after in the eye of the law. The Jewiſh ritual mentions the "conſecration of the prieſts, the clothes of ſervice, and the holy garments."

THE code of Menu makes frequent mention of the twice born, which conſiſt of ſuch of the three higher claſſes as have been inveſted with the ſacrifical thread. The language of the New Teſtament, which metaphorically uſes the phraſes of "regeneration, and being begotten and born again," moſt probably alluded to ſome of the Jewiſh rites that were analogous to thoſe of Menu.

BUT the deviations of the Jews from the worſhip preſcribed in their law were frequent. Their worſhip of images, and falſe gods, in the groves and high places, is charged againſt them on many occaſions *: theſe were the practices of the ſurrounding nations. They muſt recur to every perſon's mind who has obſerved the multitude of Hindoo images upon ſome of the rocks on the Ganges, and beneath the ſhade of large trees. The houſehold gods which were ſtolen from Laban by his daughter, probably reſembled thoſe ſmall images, particularly of the calf, of which the Hindoos are ſtill ſo fond, and be-

 fore

* Judges, chap. vi.

fore which you ſee them proſtrating themſelves daily *.

FROM a coincidence of the cuſtoms of theſe nations in ſo many various and detached particulars, it is probable that through all the warmer climates of Aſia, a conſiderable ſimilarity obtains in the manners of every nation; and from the ſingular ſtability and permanency of their inſtitutions, a minute examination of them at the preſent moment will tend to eſtabliſh the truth of ancient hiſtory.

THE Jewiſh and Hindoo ſcriptures mutually illuſtrate and confirm the authenticity of each other; and the preſent cuſtoms of the Aſiatics proving ſo perfectly ſimilar to what we find related in both, adds greatly to the credibility of either, at leaſt as a faith-

* The people here are guided by falſe prophets, and dreamers of dreams, in the ſame manner in which we are told the Jews were †. A gentleman in the neighbourhood of Benares lately wiſhed to have a place of worſhip removed from the vicinity of his houſe. He conſulted the Brahmins whether it could be done, and came forward with a liberal offer. He received no immediate anſwer, but one of their number gave out that he had a place of greater ſanctity for the pooja, revealed to him in a dream. The people gave him implicit credit, removed the pagoda, and the prieſt received his promiſed reward from the perſon for whoſe accommodation the dream had been ſent.

† Deut. xiii. 1.

faithful record of manners. Parts of the Jewiſh hiſtory, from their oppoſition to European manners, and their repugnance to our ideas, have been held up as objections to the authenticity of theſe records; on many of theſe the Hindoo records beſtow the fulleſt credibility.

THAT ſevere law which ordained a woman to be ſtoned to death, who on marriage did not diſcover the "tokens of virginity," is inveſted with the fulleſt authenticity by peruſing the Hindoo code: In this we obſerve ſevere inflictions in the ſame circumſtances; and a whole chapter of regulations is devoted to aſcertain the puniſhment of thoſe offences by which theſe tokens may be deſtroyed *.

IN the ſame manner, from the peculiarity of the Jewiſh manners, and from the great damage ſuppoſed to be ſuſtained from eating impure food, it was criminal to offer it: and ſince chaſtity in a woman was ſo eſſential in the eye of the law, to aſperſe her on that head was puniſhed with a ſevere fine. The inſtitutions of the Brahmins upon theſe points are perfectly ſimilar: whoever cauſed a prieſt to eat impure food, or drink wine, is fined, and in certain caſes is put to death †; nor is he treated with leſs ſeverity who falſely aſperſes the chaſtity of a woman's conduct.

FROM

* Vide Gentoo Laws, chap. 20. ſect. 5. paſſim.

† Idem, chap. 11. ſect. 6.

From theſe numerous coincidences of the manners and writings of the natives of this country with thoſe of the ancient Jews, it has been ſuppoſed that in ſome former period an intercourſe was maintained between them. This ſome have concluded to have taken place during their abode in Egypt; others with greater probability have imagined that their intercourſe aroſe from the reſidence of the Jews in the dominions of the Babyloniſh kings, who then poſſeſſed the countries bordering upon Hindoſtan; as we are informed by the ſacred books: "Now it came to paſs, in the days of Ahaſuerus, (this is Ahaſuerus which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia over an hundred and ſeven and twenty provinces *.")

PECU-

* This paſſage explains the cauſe of the elevation of a Jeweſs, Eſther, to the Perſian throne. Vide Eſt. ch. 1. v. 1.

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Calcutta, Dec. 1798.

THE ſacred books of the Hindoos * comprehend a more voluminous ſyſtem of law, theology and moral ſcience, than thoſe of any other nation: the mythology of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, ſeem only detached ſhreds, when compared with theſe compendious volumes.

IT regulates not only the interior economy of every private family, but contains the whole ſyſtem of

* A ſmall portion of them only has yet been tranſlated; a compilation by certain Brahmins collected at Calcutta by Governor Haſtings, and rendered by Mr Halhed into Engliſh, under the title of 'A Code of Gentoo Laws;' another portion containing 'the Inſtitutes of Menu,' has been tranſlated by Sir W. Jones. In the obſervations here offered, theſe ſources of information are referred to as authentic.

of juriſprudence, by which property is held, and the rules by which government itſelf is adminiſtered. The Hindoos believe theſe books to contain treaſures of inſpired wiſdom, and they conſiſtently ſubmit to their ordination the whole ſtructure of ſociety, and the regulation of every part of it.

THE whole muſt, however, be regarded as the moſt complete ſyſtem of prieſtcraft ever erected for the ſubjugation of mankind. Knowledge, in the nature of things, muſt always acquire an aſcendant over timidity and ignorance; and the chief peculiarity diſplayed by the Aſiatic nations is the lofty and impoſing tone which it aſſumes, and the ſubmiſſive tameneſs and credulity with which every pretention to it is received by the people.

THE ſupreme powers, Legiſlative, Executive, and Judicial, ſeem, under the Hindoo governments, to have been retained originally in the hands of the Brahmins. By them, the prince is ſtiled the magiſtrate, and his powers in every department are marked out by the prieſthood in the ſacred books, the interpretation, and perhaps the compoſition of which, was excluſively claimed by their order.

MENU, the ſon of GOD, himſelf a divine perſon, publiſhes by them his authoritative commands, to which the monarch ſeems to have been ſubjected as much as any of the people. Government is in the ſtricteſt ſenſe theocratical; the Brahmins adminiſter

it

it, and are declared in the Scripture "to be by right the chief of the whole creation *." The very birth of a Brahmin is a conſtant incarnation of the God of Juſtice: when a Brahmin ſprings to light, he is born above the world, the chief of all creatures, aſſigned to guard the treaſury of duties, religious and civil †.

THE world and every thing it contains is declared to belong in ſubſtance to this order, for whom it is aſſerted to have been created; and "through the benevolence of the Brahmin other mortals enjoy life."

THESE claims, lofty as they certainly are, were not perhaps ill-ſuited, or diſproportioned to the ſimplicity of thoſe upon whom they were made; nor is it ſurpriſing that the Brahmins interfered in the legiſlature, and all the functions of government.

BY the Sacred Books, the magiſtrate is not only directed *when*, and *how* he ſhall make war; but in the raiſing and diſcipline of armies; the choice of all his ſervants, from the higheſt officer of ſtate to the loweſt menial attendant. He is allowed no excluſive or individual power, but is directed to chooſe a certain number of counſellors, and "to one learned Brahmin diſtinguiſhed among them all, he is charged

* Menu, chap 1ſt, v. 93. † Idem, v. 98, 99.
‡ Idem, chap. v. 101.

charged to impart his momentous counſel, and to intruſt to him with full confidence *all tranſactions* *."

The place of his reſidence, and the choice of his ambaſſadors, are not committed to the diſcretion of the prince; his inſtructions deſcend even to the nomination of a domeſtic prieſt, and to the payment of his menial ſervants†. The *quantum* of taxes to be impoſed on each claſs of inhabitants, is fixed with conſiderable preciſion; different proportions of revenue are to be drawn from merchandize, from agriculture, and from manual labour, all ſpecified with a particularity that ſeems almoſt to preclude diſcretionary power in that important branch of prerogative. Upon the Brahmin, however, no tax whatever can be impoſed: even in the caſe of crimes and confiſcation, none of his property can ever be ſeized by the prophane hands of the magiſtrate. It muſt go to the prieſthood; "for a king, though dying with want, muſt not receive any tax from a Brahmin learned in the Vedas."

The prieſthood is not only exempted from all contribution to the ſupport of government, but a ſupport from the ſtate is decreed for them; all ranks are enjoined to make them preſents, the merit of

* Menu, chap. 7, v. 58, 59.

† One ana a day as wages, are ſpecified, v. 124.

of which is declared in certain caſes to be infinite; and in all, better than offerings of holy fire ||.

THE ſacrifices of the king are always to be accompanied with gifts of different kinds to the Brahmins, beſides their legal proviſion from the ſtate. The judicial power ſeems to have been veſted in this order; for though the king was allowed to decide cauſes perſonally, as in the feudal monarchies of Europe, he was always obliged to be counſelled by the Brahmins, and when not preſent, the whole judicial power was exerciſed by this order.

THE Hindoo governments ſeem then to have been hierarchical, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word: whether the prieſts pretended to receive their commands from Menu or Brigha, they were always abſolute over the people, who were as effectually ruled by them as the Romans were by Romulus when tutored by Egeria.

THAT we do not now ſee the Brahminical hierarchy in this plenitude of power, muſt be aſcribed to the conqueſt of the country by a people hoſtile to this ſyſtem.

|| Menu, ch. 7. v. 81.

In every thing, not relating to government, its influence ſeems as powerful as ever: its dictates are as abſolutely binding upon the Hindoo in his eating, drinking, ablutions, and every part of his behaviour, as the decrees of fate. In Thibet, where the Chineſe government has made but few encroachments on the independence of that country, the Lama is not only a prince and king, but a deity worſhipped by vaſt multitudes, even beyond the limits of his territory.

At whatever time the Sacred Books of the Hindoos were written, they contain numberleſs alluſions to a ſtate of ſociety conſiderably advanced in the arts of life: they mention towns of eight coſs in length, or ſixteen miles, a circumſtance which implies a degree of population far exceeding that of the Jewiſh nation at any period of their hiſtory ‡. They eſtabliſh a *jus gentium*, or law of nations, more humane and refined than has ever been adopted by any people in the firſt ſtages of their union. Every man is forbidden to ſtrike his foe with ſharp arms concealed in wood; with arrows miſchievouſly barbed; with poiſoned arrows, or with darts blazing with fire: he is forbid to ſtrike his enemy when alighted from his car, when he ſues for life with cloſed palms, when he is aſleep, or when he has loſt

‡ Mention is made of officers commanding an hundred, and officers a thouſand towns.

loſt his coat of mail *. Priſoners, it is true, were made ſlaves; but this was allowed in the brighteſt periods of the Roman hiſtory.

THEIR tolerance for the vanquiſhed in matters of religion, ſeems far to outdo the indulgence of paganiſm itſelf; tho' impartial hiſtory has declared it more accommodating than the Theiſm either of the Jews, Chriſtians, or Mahommedans. A belief of the unity of Deity, according to Mr Hume, as it implies the falſehood of all other ſyſtems, leads to intolerance towards their abettors, as inſultors of the majeſty of the Supreme Being. Be this as it may, the Romans generally permitted the conquered the worſhip of their deities, and had on ſome occaſions the complacency to aſſociate them with their own. This higheſt condeſcenſion of European conquerors is ſtrictly enjoined by every Hindoo prince, who is commanded, after conquering a country, to reſpect the deities adored in it, and their virtuous prieſts; he is bound alſo to eſtabliſh the laws of the conquered nation as declared in *their books* †.

THIS injunction of their Scripture is not merely a ſpeculative point of faith with the Hindoo, but actuates his conduct. Numbers liſten with ſilent reſpect

* The caſes mentioned are more numerous, and breathe greater humanity than is practiſed at preſent by any people.

† Menu, chap. 7. v. 201, 202.

ſpect to the Chriſtians and Mahommedans, when worſhipping a deity to them unknown: their conduct he deems pious and commendable; and their ſyſtem, however good, the Hindoo is ſatisfied muſt be inferior to that perfect wiſdom which breathes in his own.

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Calcutta, Jan. 1793.

THE Mahommedans by whom the peninſula of Hindoſtan was ſo long held in ſubjection, are ſtill a numerous race *, and preſerve a remarkable difference in their character and manners as well as their religion. By the latter they are laid under no obligation to early marriage, and this circumſtance perhaps is the cauſe of that diſſolute conduct with which both ſexes are ſo generally charged. By far the greater part of the females who live by proſtitution, and in India they are very numerous, belong to the Mahommedan race. The men are, if poſſible, ſtill more univerſally diſſolute; ſo that from a premature and exceſſive waſte of their ſtrength they are ſoon overtaken by the debility of age.

THEY

* Some ſay the tenth part of the whole inhabitants.

They are, notwithſtanding the prohibition of their religion, often addicted to intoxication, by taking ſpirits and opium, or the exceſſive uſe of tobacco. Unaccuſtomed to reſtrain their inclinations, they are proud, iraſcible, and vindictive. A few of them are generally employed as domeſtics, in waiting at the table, or in the occupation of cookery, duties which the Hindoos, from ſuperſtition, are unwilling to perform: many enliſt in the native battalions; but whatever ſtation they occupy, they are far more inſolent and troubleſome than four times their number of heathens. You can by no means repoſe in a Muſſelman the ſame degree of truſt, that you ſafely confide in a Hindoo; his ſubordination muſt be more rigid and unremitting.

Though their faith be theiſm, and a much nearer approach to our ſtandard of religious opinions, than the popular creed of the other natives, it does not appear that they are profited in their moral conduct by this circumſtance: not one in an hundred is able to read his own Scriptures; and the number able to profit by what they read is ſtill much leſs conſiderable. The idea therefore entertained by ſome of our divines, that the progreſs of Iſlamiſm over ſo great a part of the world, is likely to pave the way for that of Chriſtianity, is rather to be regarded as a fond conjecture, than a fact at all eſtabliſhed by experience. The Coran, it is true, allows conſiderable authority to our ſacred records, and acknowledges the truth of Chriſt's miſſion as a ſubor-

ſubordinate prophet; but this has never influenced the conduct of Muſſelmans with lenity, or even forbearance to thoſe of that perſuaſion. Every ſyſtem differing from their own, is regarded with equal abhorrence and contempt.

HENCE has ariſen that perſecuting and fanatical ſpirit, which has ever marked the conduct of this people; whoſe cruelties in attempting to convert the Hindoos, cannot be contemplated without horror. Even where his religion is not concerned, the manners of the moorman are frequently characteriſed by brutality. The treatment of the Britiſh priſoners taken by Hyder Ally, is perhaps unexampled for deliberate, and unprovoked cruelty, in the annals of hiſtory. Some of the officers, after languiſhing many years in priſon, where they were loaded with irons like the vileſt criminals, were forced upon the ſad alternative of engaging in the ſervice of the tyrant, or of dying by poiſon. In theſe noiſome dungeons, ſome died of famine, many were driven to diſtraction by deſpair, and many periſhed by diſeaſe. In all caſes where this cruelty proved fatal, the victims were denied the honour of a grave; their bodies were thrown out, and devoured by dogs and vultures. The particulars of theſe enormities were committed to writing by an officer of great veracity, who was himſelf one of the few who ſurvived the outrage of that unrelenting monſter *.

THAT

* Vide Memoirs of the war, &c.

THAT contempt for learning, with which theſe zealots are actuated, perhaps adds to the ferocity of their diſpoſition*; as it certainly deſtroys every principle of tolerance and liberality to ſuch as follow a different ſyſtem of religious faith. The privates taken by Hyder, from this cauſe, ſuffered a refinement of cruelty equally diſgraceful to the tyrant, and degrading in the eyes of thoſe who were the unhappy victims of it: they were not only compelled to enter the ſervice, but to undergo the painful initiatory rite to the religion of the deſpot.

IN the practice of the Mahommedan worſhip, there is a number of rites equally frivolous and unmeaning with thoſe of the Hindoos themſelves. Some of their holiday ſolemnities are diſgraced by a ferocity to which the latter are happily ſtrangers. The proceſſion at the Mohurram, a feſtival in commemoration of the death of Hoſſeim and Haſſen, are accompanied with gladiators, who fight each other with daggers and ſpears, to the great edification of the brutal multitude. In theſe rencounters, which laſt for ten days, blood is often ſhed, and ſeveral lives loſt; for the tragedy which is begun in ſhow, as zeal becomes more ardent and ungovernable, terminates often in all the horrors of reality.

ONE

* Scilicet ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros.

One difference between the Hindoo and Mahommedan ſuperſtition, is the more worthy of remark, becauſe it is attended with very important conſequences. The former, ſo far from producing a ſpirit of proſelytiſm, poſitively admits of no converts. Any perſon profeſſing a regard for its rites, is allowed to obſerve them, but no degree of ſincerity, or even zeal in theſe profeſſions, will entitle him to any rank in ſociety, or to aſſociate even with the loweſt claſs. All religion, according to them, may be in ſome reſpects true and acceptable to the Deity, but to the Hindoo they appear ſo inferior in purity to his own, that to aſſociate with their profeſſors would pollute and degrade him forever.

A Hindoo of any rank, by changing his religion, entails diſgrace not only on himſelf, but on all his near relations, who loſe their caſt, and live in perpetual excluſion from ſociety. It is ſaid that one in this place lately made application to a chaplain in order to be baptiſed, from this vindictive motive, after having quarrelled with his relations. The chaplain very properly rejected his application as utterly repugnant to that ſyſtem which he meant to embrace.

The Muſſulman faith is in all theſe particulars directly the reverſe. The converſion of a heathen is one of the moſt meritorious actions a Mahommedan can perform; and there is no means however cruel or immoral, which are not regarded as ſanctified by

this holy end: hence the intolerant zeal, and cruel perſecutions which have ever marked the progreſs of Mahommedan conqueſts.

THESE two races of men, after living ſo many centuries under the ſame government, and in the ſame ſociety, gradually approximate in many of their opinions, and in ſome points acquire a ſimilarity of manners. The Muſſulmans in the ſervice of Europeans, are nearly equally faſtidious and averſe to any work which they conceive out of their routine of duty, under the pretence of its being incompatible with his caſt. The man who dreſſes hair will feel himſelf degraded by taking charge of clothes; and he who engages for the latter object, will for no conſideration condeſcend to ſweep the floor. The ſervants who attend the table are conceived to move in a ſphere far too high for carrying an umbrella or a lamp before their maſter. This faſtidious behaviour gratifies at once their pride and their indolence. Too ignorant to conceive that there can be no turpitude in actions not immoral, or to be convinced that real worth and dignity muſt ariſe from carefully performing the duties of their ſtation, they prove, as ſervants, equally faſtidious, and leſs uſeful than the Hindoos themſelves. The ſcrupuloſities of rank, and caſt, give an air of conſequence to that ignorant people, and the Mahommedans readily adopt a foible ſo gratifying as theſe to their pride and indolence. This circumſtance obliges Europeans, even of moderate rank, to keep up an eſtabliſhment of domeſtics

ſuperior

ſuperior in number to that of a nobleman in Europe; and after this trouble and expence has been incurred, he is much worſe ſerved than he would there find himſelf by two or three domeſtics.

ANOTHER melancholy point of coincidence, in the ſituation of theſe people, is the ſmall influence which the religion of both has upon moral conduct. There is hardly any inſtance in which the faith of either operates to direct him in the practice of juſtice and mercy: and in the caſe of the Muſſulman, there are a thouſand examples of his religion being made the pretext for violating their dictates. The Mahommedan ſuperſtition has a more feeble hold over its votaries even in urging them to a compliance with its own rites, than the Indian ſyſtem, either becauſe its neglect is not followed by ſuch dreadful conſequences, or becauſe the ſyſtem is leſs mature, and its profeſſors removed at a greater diſtance from Mecca, the centre of its power, and the place where its full vigour is perhaps unimpaired. From whatever cauſe, the Muſſulman is certainly leſs a ſlave to his ſuperſtition, than the Hindoo. Though enjoined ſobriety, he is frequently drunk; believing honeſty to be a duty, he is often a cheat; and convinced of the expediency of marriage, he lives frequently in the habit of promiſcuous debauchery.

IN their intercourſe with the female ſex, the manners of both claſſes of inhabitants bear a great ſimilarity. Female virtue among each, is ſecured by a

ſecluſion of the ſex almoſt totally from ſociety; and that by a ſtrictneſs and vigilance well ſuited to the mean idea they entertain of their fidelity. The man who is conſcious of habitual frailty in himſelf, cannot eaſily give credit to another for continence and ſelf-denial, virtues almoſt beyond his conception. The Haram and the Zenana † are therefore guarded with equal ſolicitude, not only from the viſits of the males, but from the intruſion of every eye: and, perhaps, neither the Hindoo nor the Muſſulman form a wrong eſtimate of female virtue in the Eaſt. Whatever virtue obtains there, muſt be either conſtitutional, or the effect of reſtraint. What virtue, regulated by principles of duty, can be expected from perſons almoſt without education, who have been excluded from their infancy from every active ſcene of life, where alone there can be ſelf-government, and where either virtue or temptation can alone exiſt? The women in Hindoſtan ſeem accordingly to poſſeſs but few ideas, and but little chaſtity. Accuſtomed to regard themſelves, what in fact they have ever been, merely the inſtruments of ſenſual pleaſure, and the means of perpetuating the ſpecies, that object engages the whole range of their knowledge, and conſtitutes the ſum of their duty. To them this muſt appear the great end of their being; and if the idea of guilt or culpability ever meet them, it muſt ariſe from their neglect

† Among perſons of rank only.

glect of ſo important a duty. To rely upon the prudence and ſelf-denial of perſons impreſſed with ſuch ideas, might eventually prove a greater mark of credulity than of wiſdom.

In theſe manſions of voluptuous indulgence, the Rajahs and Mahommedan Nabobs ſpend a great portion of their time, and ſeem to enjoy their principal comfort. Unaccuſtomed themſelves to mental exertion, perhaps the qualities of the mind are not neceſſary to their enjoyment. Their pleaſure ſeems chiefly ſenſual, and incapable of being animated or improved by thoſe accompliſhments which are deemed ſo neceſſary by an European voluptuary.

The number of wives preſcribed by his religion to the Hindoo, is, I believe, undefined. The Mahommedan is allowed four, with an indefinite number of concubines; the circumſtances of each individual commonly determine the number of his Zenana. A poor man ſeldom encumbers himſelf with the ſupport of more than one; and ſuch marriages are in general the moſt prolific, as well as the moſt common. In ſuch circumſtances, too, mutual affection ſeems moſt frequent. It is pleaſing to obſerve with what punctuality and cheerfulneſs thoſe in the ſervice of Europeans remit a little portion of their allowance for the ſupport of their families, if abſent. Their ſmall manſions, though guarded with leſs ſtrictneſs, it is probable contain a larger ſtock of virtue, than an expenſive train of eunuchs can pre-

preſerve in the ſplendid Zenanas of the prince. Hindoo women, of the lower ranks, eſpecially ſuch as are old or married, are not concealed with ſo much ſolicitude as thoſe of the moormen; and from this circumſtance, ſome have ſuppoſed, that the whole ſyſtem of female confinement is borrowed by the Hindoos from that people *.

But from whatever origin this ſyſtem of female treatment may be derived, there can hardly be a doubt of its unfavourable influence upon their underſtanding. Every part of their conduct and converſation indicates a deplorable weakneſs of intellect and ſterility of ideas. Human nature is not always conſiſtent; nor are the efforts of the mind always proportioned to our opportunities of exertion. Bred in ſcenes of the moſt voluptuous ſenſuality, theſe Indian ladies exhibit on certain occaſions the moſt magnanimous and reſolute exertion of fortitude of which hiſtory records any example. When a Hindoo of rank dies, or languiſhes in a ſtate which indicates the approach of his diſſolution, his favourite wife aſſumes the dreadful purpoſe of burning herſelf on the ſame funeral pile with her huſband. This reſolution is formed with deliberation, and is declared to be voluntary and fixed, three ſeveral times in the preſence of relations. This is done that no advantage

* Vide Robertſon's Hiſt. Diſquiſit. Append.; and Sketches of the Manners of the Hindoos.

advantage may ſeem to have been taken of the tranſient ebullition of frantic grief, and that the perſon devoting herſelf may have full time to reflect on the important ſacrifice ſhe is about to make to her affections, or to the cuſtoms of her country. No ſooner is the purpoſe finally declared, than it is pronounced irrevocable; and the heroic lady walks with firmneſs and compoſure to the funeral pile, which ſhe mounts, after having dealt out her laſt benedictions to her remaining friends. There is hardly an inſtance of any individual of theſe ladies, nurſed in the lap of pleaſure, having ſhrunk from this horrid trial of their fortitude, after it was undertaken; and incredible as it may ſeem, hardly any inſtance of their betraying ſymptoms of fear, heſitation, or pain.

VARIOUS cauſes have been aſſigned for this unexampled fortitude, which perhaps is owing to the all-powerful effect of cuſtom in this country, and the immediate hope of entering on a ſtate of exquiſite enjoyment. An Hindoo no more thinks of evading the cuſtomary rites of religion, than an European thinks of evading the unerring ſtroke of death. Its dictates appear to him the call of an invincible neceſſity, to which he ſubmits without reluctance, becauſe unavoidable; and without choice, becauſe ordered by the Brahmins.

Calcutta, Jan. 1798.

THE marriages of the Hindoos have already been described; they are here more universal, and contracted at an earlier period, than perhaps in any other part of the world. Parents are enjoined to marry their children before their eleventh year; and if no progeny is the fruit of the first marriage, poligamy, which is allowed, but not generally practiſed, is then cuſtomary. The man marries another wife; and in the event of a wife's death, a third marriage is allowed, becauſe, according to the Hindoo faith, it is a matter of great conſequence that every individual ſhall leave a repreſentative who may perform the requiſite ceremonies; the fradha for the repoſe of his ſoul.

THIS

THIS is deemed a matter of ſo much importance, that a conſiderable part of a man's fortune is ſpent in celebrating feſtivals of this nature; and even where he poſſeſſes none, a pious Hindoo will rather borrow a ſum, than omit ſo momentuous a duty. It is for this reaſon, that after a firſt, and perhaps a ſecond wife, have been unfruitful, a man is permitted to adopt a ſon. This act confers all the advantages that reſult from that relation, and among this people it is performed with much ſolemnity.

THE Hindoo who has no children of his own, and reſolves to adopt, aſſembles his relations, and thoſe of the adoptive child. A large braſs plate † is placed upon the floor, on which the child ſtands, if ſufficiently old; if not, he is ſupported by a Brahmin. The huſband and wife then ſay, with a loud voice; "Having no ſon of our own, we wiſh to adopt the child which is now before you: we chooſe him for our ſon; and henceforward he has, and is to enjoy the ſame right to our fortune as if he were begotten by, and born by us; nor is he to expect any thing from his natural parents. In confirmation of this, we ſhall proceed to make our vows, if you who are preſent have nothing to object." If thoſe who aſſiſt give their approbation, the ceremony is completed by the huſband and wife drinking water mixed with ſaffron, and pouring part of it on the feet

† Sketches of the manners and cuſtoms of the Hindoos.

of the child. The tranſaction is recorded, and an atteſtation of it ſigned before the company. Nor is the right of this adopted ſon defeated by the natural offſpring of the parents, ſhould they afterwards have children. On the contrary, he retains the hereditary right, as firſt born; and the parties far from repenting of what they have done, are taught to believe that their fecundity is a bleſſing of Heaven, conferred on them, for thus introducing a ſtranger into their family.

As the Hindoo believes that the due performance of the uſual rites to his manes, tends to mitigate his puniſhment in a future ſtate, he is extremely anxious to have children to perform this duty: hence he deems ſterility a ſevere misfortune, or rather the infliction of offended Deity. On this principle, married women ſometimes wear a ſmall gold *Lingam* * upon the neck or arm: on this account too, worſhip is paid this ſtrange deity to obtain fecundity. "Thoſe who dedicate themſelves to the worſhip of this deity ſwear to obſerve inviolable chaſtity. They do not deprive themſelves, like the prieſts of Atys, of the means of breaking their vows; but were it diſcovered that they had been unfaithful to them, the puniſhment

* An image of productive power, not to be explained. It did not occur to the legiſlators of the Eaſt, that any thing natural could be offenſively obſcene. The worſhip of the Lingam is therefore no proof of depravity of morals. Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. 1ſt.

ment is death. They go naked; but being conſidered as ſanctified perſons, the women approach them without ſcruple, nor is it thought that their modeſty ſhould be offended at it. Huſbands, whoſe wives are barren, ſolicit them to come to their houſes, or ſend their wives to worſhip at the temples; and it is believed that the ceremonies obſerved on theſe occaſions are productive of the deſired effect *."

However diſcordant ſuch rites may appear to European notions of decorum, they are by no means ſingular in the annals of ſuperſtition. The figure of Pallas was conſecrated to Oſiris and to Bacchus: at the feſtivals of the former it was carried by the women of Egypt, as the figure of Lingam is at preſent by the women of India.

The ceremonies connected with marriage are extremely numerous, and muſt prove expenſive to the poor. They commence in the infancy of the parties, and are again renewed when the bride arrives at the age of puberty: another ſet of obſervances are gone through when ſhe becomes pregnant; others ſtill when ſhe paſſes the ſeventh month without accident; and laſtly thankſgiving is returned to the gods for her ſafe delivery. Among the rich, ſome of theſe

* Sketches of the manners and cuſtoms of the Hindoos, vol. 2d, p. 213.

theſe feſtivals continue ſeveral days, and coſt the parents immenſe ſums.

About ten days after the birth of a child, it undergoes a rite ſomewhat reſembling baptiſm. The relations are aſſembled; and if, after examining the planets, the Brahmin finds the omen favourable, he takes water from a number of pots provided for the purpoſe, and ſprinkles the child's forehead, while he gives it a name; and the ceremony concludes with prayers to the gods, preſents to the brahmins, and alms to the poor.

One of the moſt ſalutary of their inſtitutions ordains, that all mothers ſhall ſuckle their own children; a duty from which nothing but ſickneſs can exempt them. At a certain age each youth, belonging to the three ſuperior caſts, receives a ſtring, which he wears round his neck, which indicates his rank; when this, which ſeems to correſpond with the *toga virilis* of the Romans, is aſſumed, new ceremonies are obſerved, and freſh preſents are made to the Brahmins. So deeply is ſuperſtition engrafted on the whole ſyſtem of life, that there is no age nor condition in which the prieſthood does not profit by the piety or ſuperſtition of the people.

The manner in which the greater number of the children of the poor are educated, has already been noticed. Thoſe of better fortunes are taught by Brahmins, in a *pandal*, or room, made of beams and leaves

leaves of the palm tree. The youth ſit on mats ſpread upon the floor. The books are made of leaves; and the pen is uſually a pointed inſtrument, with which the letters are engraved. The palm leaves uſed for this purpoſe are cut into ſtripes about an inch broad; their ſurface is hard and ſmooth, ſo that the writing may be preſerved almoſt for any period of time without being effaced. Until they have made ſome proficiency, the boys write upon the ſand with the finger, as already deſcribed; and in this way M. Ziegbalg, the celebrated miſſionary, who firſt gave a dictionary of the Malabar language, acquired his knowledge of that tongue. Arithmetic is added to the accompliſhments of reading and writing, in the ordinary courſe of education, and the calculations are performed by the means of pebbles or ſmall ſhells.

After this previous diſcipline, the Hindoo youth is prepared to enter upon his profeſſional duty; but of this he has no choice, every individual adhering to that of his family *.—Of the education of the native women, we are but little informed. Their range of duty in ſociety is ſo limited, that the years of their infancy are probably ſpent in learning the ceremonies of their religion, and a few domeſtic duties,

* This peculiarity is noticed by Diod. Sicul.—Non enim fas eſt, militem agrum colere, nec philoſophare artificem.—Lib. 2d. cap. 10th.

ties, in which we ſee the females afterwards engaged. Dreſs and finery, thoſe copious ſources of female ſtudy, are here hardly known; at leaſt they are always uniform, and ſo extremely limited as to leave no room for invention.

It is not the practice of the Hindoos to give any dowry on the marriage of a daughter; on the contrary, when a girl is demanded of her father, and his conſent obtained, a preſent is made to him by the intended huſband, as a token that ſhe thereafter belongs to him. This probably was originally a purchaſe; as was the caſe among the early Romans, who were in the ancient law ſaid to acquire them *coëmptione*, as they did afterwards by the ceremonies of confarreation.

The confinement of the Hindoo women, and the general purity of their manners, give little room for diſſolving marriage by divorce. Death is the uſual manner in which that connection ceaſes; and here it was formerly a received opinion, that one of the wives of a great man ſhould burn herſelf with her deceaſed huſband. The influence of the Mahommedan government, and ſtill more that of the Britiſh, has tended to diſcourage a practice ſo repugnant to humanity and reaſon. Every argument of diſſuaſion has been uſed by them, and frequently with effect. A Rajah in one of the Britiſh provinces having been dangerouſly ill, it was communicated to the commanding officer, that his wife, in the event of his

his death, intended to burn herſelf upon the ſame pile. The Rajah had an only child about five years of age. The European commander built his argument on this circumſtance; and diſpatched a native to repreſent to the widow, after the deceaſe of the Rajah, the danger to which her ſon muſt be expoſed, if left to the doubtful care of ambitious relations, who had often attempted to diſturb the peace even of his father: that to live for his ſake would be preferring an important and natural duty to an unnatural and imaginary one; and that by diſcharging the office of a tender and prudent mother, ſhe would beſt prove her affection and reſpect for the memory of her deceaſed huſband. He was likewiſe deſired to ſignify to the Brahmins, that ſhould they attempt to proceed to the ceremony, an officer who commanded a neighbouring garriſon, would prevent it. The fear of ſome public act of violence prevailed with the prieſts, and not the arguments; with theſe they were highly offended, and even affected to treat them with much contempt. The Rajah died; and the widow being a woman of ſenſe and merit, was afterwards of infinite uſe to his ſon.

Having thus a claim to the protection and good offices of the perſon, who, it may be ſaid, had forced her to live, ſhe through his means enjoyed a degree of reſpect and conſideration, which, according to the cuſtoms of the country, ſhe muſt otherwiſe have loſt. She obtained from him ſeveral marks of indulgence for

for her ſon; and in one of her letters ſhe expreſſes herſelf to the following effect:

"When you recollect that I am his mother, and that you prevailed upon me to diſhonour myſelf for his ſake, you will ceaſe to be offended at me for ſoliciting this favour for him. You forced a duty upon me which does not belong to our ſex; if I fail in the execution of it, I ſhall be the reproach of all who are allied to me; if I ſucceed, and this country flouriſh, my offence may be forgotten: my happineſs depends upon you; on mine, depends that of many; conſider this and determine *."

Some few of the Hindoos inſtead of burning, bury the dead; as the Mahommedans. For this we have the authority of ſeveral travellers. It has not come within my obſervation; but Bernier, after mentioning women who burn themſelves, ſays; "This conduct, however cruel and barbarous, is exceeded by what the Brahmins do in ſome other parts of India: for inſtead of burning the women who wiſh to die with their huſbands, they inter them alive up to the chin, and then two or three fall upon them to choak them."

Notwithstanding the acknowledged temperance of the Hindoos, there are among them few inſtances of

* Vide Sketches, &c. vol. 2. p. 32.

of extraordinary longevity. Even thoſe who are permitted to eat meat, are enjoined to do it ſparingly. Their meals are only two; a circumſtance favourable to health, but which ſeems to give them a leſs decided advantage over the Muſſulmans, than might be imagined.

EVERY Hindoo believes, that after death his ſoul continues to exiſt, and to animate ſome being more or leſs dignified according to his paſt life; and that after undergoing a number of metamorphoſes, ſufficient for its purification, it will be abſorbed into the divine eſſence. Some, it is ſaid, "believe that their ſouls are ſent back to the ſpot where their bodies were burnt, there to wait till new bodies are prepared for their reception. This was one of the opinions of Plato, which ſeems to have been adopted by the primitive Chriſtians; for an ordinance of the church of Rome forbids having lights, or making merriments in the church yard at night, leſt they ſhould diſturb the ſouls that might come thither." It ſeems alſo to have been a notion of the Jews, that the human ſoul animated ſeveral bodies ſucceſſively, and that a man in the preſent life might ſuffer for the puniſhment of guilt contracted in a previous ſtate of exiſtence: Hence the queſtion put to Chriſt, "Was it this man or his parents who ſinned, that he was *born* blind?"

THE dreſs of the inferior part of the natives, has already been noticed; that of the higher ranks does

not exclude magnificence, nor elegance. Both Mahommedans and Hindoos of condition wear a Jama, or gown of fine muſlin, neatly fitted to the body in the upper part, and floating looſely from the middle, as low as the feet. The former ties his Jama on the right ſide of the breaſt, and the latter on the left: over this is ſometimes worn a ſhort cloſe veſt of worked cotton, or ſilk, braided with ſmall flowers of ſilver or gold. The turban, the girdle, and the ſlippers, are the moſt highly ornamented parts of dreſs. Theſe are not only embroidered with gold and ſilver, but are ſometimes adorned with precious ſtones. The preſent Nabob of Bengal, on days of ceremony, diſplays an aſſortment of jewels and pearls on his dreſs to a conſiderable amount. Quintus Curtius has, in a few words, given a pretty accurate deſcription of the dreſs of a Hindoo Rajah. "Veſtis erat auro purpuraque diſtincta, quæ etiam crura velabat: aureis ſoliis inſeruerat gemmas: lacerti quoque et brachia margaritis ornata erant. Pendebant ex auribus inſignes candore et magnitudine lapilli *."

The dreſs of the women, does not vary more than that of the men; the chief diſtinction conſiſting in the fineneſs of the cloth, and the value of their jewels. They in general wear a cloſe jacket, which only extends downwards to cover the breaſts, but com-

* Lib. 9. cap. 1.

completely ſhews their form. It has tight ſleeves, which reach about halfway from the ſhoulder to the elbow; and a narrow border round all the edges painted or embroidered in different colours. A piece of white cotton cloth wrapped ſeveral times round the loins, and falling down over the legs to the ankle, ſerves as a petticoat. A wide piece of muſlin is thrown over the left ſhoulder, which, paſſing under the right arm, is croſſed round the middle; and being tucked under the cloth wrapped round the loins, hangs down to the feet. One end of this cloth is ſometimes ſpread over the head, and ſerves for a veil. The hair is rolled up into a knot upon the back part of the head, where it is faſtened with a gold pin, and ornamented with jewels *.

Thoſe mental accompliſhments, ſo highly prized in the ladies of Europe, are avoided by the Hindoos, as injurious to that ſimplicity of manners, and decorous behaviour, which they imagine render them eſtimable in their families: few of them are taught to read or write. The dancing women compoſe a ſeparate claſs, and live under the protection of government according to their own particular rules. Such of them as are deſtined to be the votaries of pleaſure, are taught every qualification which they imagine may tend to captivate and entertain the other

* Sketches of the manners and cuſtoms of the Hindoos, vol. 2. p. 46.

other ſex. In the code of Hindoo laws there are ſome proviſions made in their favour.

THE dreſs of theſe women is various and fantaſtical; they generally wear, beſides the dreſs of other females, a ſort of looſe drawers like trouſers; they are ſubject to no reſtraint either in eating or drinking, excepting the article of beef. Their ankles and toes are decorated with gold or ſilver rings, to which they ſometimes attach ſmall bells.

EFFORTS OF EUROPEANS IN THE CONVERSION OF THE NATIVES.

.....

Calcutta, Dec. 1796.

EVERY European nation that has hitherto acquired territorial poſſeſſions in India, as if convinced of the deſtructive influence of the Brahminical ſyſtem on knowledge, induſtry and virtue, have laboured with conſiderable perſeverance and zeal in order to reſcue its votaries from that ignorance and degradation in which this ſuperſtition has involved the great body of the people.

MISSIONARIES have been ſent out from Europe to reclaim the natives from their error, both on the part of government, and of individuals; but no fruit has been reaped from their labours, in any degree correſponding to the hopes of the pious, or the liberal contributions of the parties concerned. The Portugueſe, in the firſt fervour of their zeal, engaged in this undertaking

dertaking with an alacrity that ſeemed worthy of its importance. Their worſhip, by the number of its ſhowy rites, being in ſome degree aſſimilated to that of their own country, might appear well ſuited to captivate the attention of this ſimple people, though it might not greatly enlarge the underſtanding; yet have the effects produced in India by all their endeavours invariably proved inadequate to the expectations formed by the projectors in Europe.

THE great St Francis de Xavier himſelf, who was long regarded as the apoſtle of the Eaſt, and who was believed by many to have wrought miracles in this field of pious induſtry, has left but ſcanty proofs of his ſucceſs. Though the number of his nominal converts was ſo conſiderable as to obtain for him the honour of canonization after his death, yet it cannot be affirmed that he has added much to the knowledge, induſtry or virtue, of the poor pariahs who liſtened with devout admiration to his diſcourſes.

HIS reſidence in India, during a period of ten years preceeding 1552, is ſaid to have been ſignaliſed by a number of converſions in Goa, Comorin, Malacca and Japan; but the preſent ſtate of chriſtianity in theſe parts, affords but ſmall corroboration of the preternatural gifts that have been aſcribed to this great man. The annals of the Portugueſe church in the Eaſt, in this period, are as frequently diſgraced by credulity and bigotry, as they were in the parent ſtate.

THE

The Dutch, though that nation has been long more diſtinguiſhed for its avidity in the purſuits of commerce and the accumulation of wealth, than for zeal in diſſeminating religion, has not left the taſk untried of converting the natives of its dominions in Aſia. Chaplains have been regularly eſtabliſhed, not only in Batavia; but at Chinſura and Calcapore in Bengal. At the former ſettlement, I have not heard of their ſucceſs; but in the two latter, the circumſtances of the ſurrounding inhabitants, being the ſame with thoſe of our own, their labours have been equally unprofitable.

A ſociety of well diſpoſed perſons in Britain collected a fund many years ago, and ſent out miſſionaries; and though that eſtabliſhment ſtill ſubſiſts in Calcutta, no converſions of any moment have ever dignified its labours. It has for ſome time been united with a Daniſh ſociety, formed upon a ſimilar plan, and with the ſame views: after thus combining their efforts and their reſources, the miſſion is at preſent in a more languiſhing ſtate than ever. An elegant church has been erected, but none of the natives, even of the loweſt caſt, have as far as I can learn, ever condeſcended to come under its roof: the edifice is therefore uſed as one of the ordinary places of worſhip for the Engliſh inhabitants. Excepting a few of the pariah tribe in the neighbourhood of Madraſs, who are ſometimes ſeen liſtening to the diſcourſes of the Miſſionaries, with much greater appearance of wonder, than of intelligence, the apoſtles of the eaſt cannot

cannot boaſt of having gained to their ſociety, even thoſe unfortunate Hindoos, who have been debarred all communication with the reſt of mankind.

THESE conſequences are the unavoidable reſult of the labour of converſion, as it has been hitherto carried on in India; and by every perſon acquainted with the ſituation of the Hindoos, they muſt have been foreſeen. Neither the zeal of our Miſſionaries, nor that of their employers, has been directed by knowledge.

WHEN the Spaniards are ſaid to have converted thouſands of the native Americans in a day; and their clergy to have adminiſtered the ceremony of baptiſm to ſuch multitudes, that they were no longer able to liſt their hands, their enthuſiaſm impoſed upon themſelves, and led them to impoſe upon the world. Theſe new converts to chriſtianity, could in no ſenſe merit that honourable appellation. In order to their being chriſtians, it was firſt requiſite to make them reaſonable creatures, a title to which ſavages with hardly a ſingle intellectual idea, have ſurely but little claim.

THE firſt fruits of the American vineyard, were therefore, uſeleſs, by being premature. The acquieſcence of the ſimple convert, in doctrines to him incomprehenſible, could be attended with no alteration either of belief, or of conduct; no additional light was conveyed to his underſtanding, nor any new

new motive ſupplied to influence him in the practice of duty. His nam and appellation were alone changed; and if there be any virtue in charms or names, he was a complete believer from his childhood.

WERE, therefore, the whole body of the multitude of Hindoſtan, from caprice, or views of intereſt, at once to abandon their ſyſtem in the preſent ſtate of their intellectual improvement, the circumſtance might be a triumph to the miſſionaries: but it could by no means be conſtrued into a victory to truth; nor would the number of real chriſtians be augmented by this apoſtacy. In their preſent ignorance, not of religion, but of every moral precept, to lay before them the ſublime doctrines of chriſtianity, is to violate its prohibitions, by "caſting pearls before ſwine."

THAT mental degradation, and univerſal ignorance which I have already noticed as characteriſing the lower ranks of the Hindoos, muſt be previouſly removed before they can either comprehend, or profit by any religious doctrine whatever. When therefore the miſſionary pitches his tent, and harangues them in the lofty ſtrains of *his* goſpel eloquence, his labours have been followed by effects ſuited to their prudence. In Europe, where the circumſtances of the people are not attended to, or perhaps not generally known, much regret is expreſſed at this uniform want of ſucceſs in the work of converſion. You are ſurpriſed

that miracles are not wrought, in an age in which you profeſs to believe they have ceaſed.

In his preſent ſtate of ignorance, and under the terror of excommunication from the Brahmins, by whom all his opinions are implicitly guided, the converſion of a Hindoo may certainly be regarded, as a thing ſomewhat miraculous. To ſuppoſe him able to comprehend the doctrines of chriſtianity, and at liberty to embrace them, while no converts have been made by them, during a period of near two hundred years, in which they have been preached; would be to aſſert that they were inferior in value, or ſupported by leſs evidence than the doctrines of that ſyſtem to which he continues to adhere. The doctrines of chriſtianity are addreſſed to us "as wiſe men," who are commanded to "judge what they ſay: it is therefore no objection to them, that there may be a degree of ignorance below their comprehenſion, and a degree of ſuperſtitious fear, which their allurements but ill underſtood, cannot overcome.

There muſt, in every mind, be ſome degree of information, and ſome ſtrength of intellect, before a preference can be given to any arguments, or any ſyſtem of opinions to another—Over total ignorance, truth has no power.

In Greece and Rome when the pagan ſyſtem gave way to that of chriſtianity, a large portion of the people were capable of comprehending its doctrines, and of

of examining the evidence by which they are ſupported. A general knowledge both of the one and the other, were diffuſed before their reception. The circumſtances of the people, were almoſt in every reſpect the reverſe of what they are in India. They were neither attached to their theological ſyſtem, nor its practical rites by any inſurmountable prejudice.

It was a fabric conſtructed in a rude age; and the increaſe of knowledge, in ſubſequent times, had widely expoſed its groſſneſs and imperfection. Horace, Juvenal, and Lucian, had laſhed the abſurdities of the ſyſtem, and the characters of its gods, with equal freedom as thoſe of their fellow ſubjects: and before their time, the worſhip of other gods or performing different rites was rather deemed a mark of ſuperior piety, than of any malignity of heart againſt the eſtabliſhed deities of the ſtate. When therefore a ſyſtem of more rational piety, or finer morals, was publicly announced, it met with a fair diſcuſſion; and the empire of Jupiter was vanquiſhed by that of truth.

The moſt dignified characters in the ſtate who were choſen to perform the functions of religion, diſcharged their office with outward gravity, and much inward indifference: they beheld with little averſion the advancement of a new ſyſtem, from which they dreaded no evil. There was no numerous hereditary prieſthood to oppoſe its introduction; or who foreſaw in its eſtabliſhment the downfall of their order. All theſe circumſtances, in the condition of the natives of India,

are

are either different, or diametrically oppoſite. Here no colliſion of opinion has ever awakened their curioſity or ſharpened their intellects. No books ever reach their hands, to convey information; not even a newſpaper is printed in the native language; and, if it were, only a few of the higher ranks could peruſe it. Of all abſtract ideas, the multitude is almoſt entirely deſtitute: to a people in this ſtate, it is in vain to propoſe abſtract doctrines for diſcuſſion. There is hardly any ſo ſimple, as they ſhall underſtand, and hardly any too groſs for their belief.

UNFORTUNATELY for them, the Brahmins will not allow them to exerciſe the ſmall degree of reaſon they may poſſeſs. Any departure from the cuſtomary rites, is held up as of all things the moſt ſinful, and not to be expiated by the ſevereſt puniſhment. Thus the attachment of the Hindoo to his faith and worſhip, is guarded equally by his ignorance and his fears: and it is the care of the prieſthood, who are here the ſole guides of opinion, to keep him under the compleat dominion of both. They watch to preſerve ignorance, not to diſſeminate knowledge, every inlet to which is guarded as cloſely as the avenues of death.

FROM theſe cauſes no degree of ſucceſs has ever ſignalized the labours of European miſſionaries in any part of India. They ſeem, at laſt, weary of ſo fruitleſs an attempt, and have either deſiſted from the purſuit, or carry it on with a liſtleſs indifference, which

which gives no countenance either to the wiſhes of the pious, or the expectations of the miſſionaries. On the Malabar coaſt, and in the Myſore, ſome of the lower claſſes have attended the miſſionaries, and have yielded a kind of aſſent to their doctrines, if aſſent can be given to what is not underſtood.

AT different periods, the fervor of zeal, or the effuſions of humanity, have broke forth, and produced new efforts in favour of the natives: but theſe tranſient exertions have often languiſhed before they reached ſo diſtant a ſcene of action; or they have been ſoon overborne by that indolence and diſſipation which ſo frequently characteriſes Europeans in the Eaſt. There has lately been devoted to this ſervice twenty thouſand pounds, a larger ſum than any yet contributed by any individual: three miſſionaries, ſupported by the intereſt of this fund, are intended to be ſent to Benares, the great ſtorehouſe of the Brahmin ſuperſtition; there to combat its uſurpations at the very center of their power. Among the beſt informed part of our ſociety, no ſanguine expectations are entertained, that this project will terminate more ſucceſsfully than thoſe which have preceded it.

WHILE viewing the great moſque at Benares, I received a letter from a clergyman in London, acquainting me that this project was for the time laid aſide, from a refuſal of the Court of Directors to allow the miſſionaries to depart for India. They ſuſpected

pected that the perſons choſen would mingle politics with religion. No wiſe man can regret that theſe perſons were prevented from attempting a taſk which has uniformly diſappointed all their predeceſſors.

The beſt informed perſons here are fully of opinion, that to increaſe the influence of pure religion among the natives, you muſt begin by improving their knowledge; which can only be effected by inſtructing the youth. Happily the natives have no averſion to commit their children to the tuition of Europeans: they are rather ambitious that they ſhould acquire the accompliſhments of reading and writing Engliſh, as the means of enabling them to proſecute ſome lucrative branch of trade, or of introducing them as upper ſervants in the employ of the Britiſh. The Hindoos will not indeed allow their children to eat or ſleep under the ſame roof with Europeans; but they ſuffer them to remain at a day ſchool, which, for theſe purpoſes, is ſufficient.

So much is this their deſire, that there are ſeveral of their children now taught by Europeans; and many more by ſuch of the natives themſelves as underſtand a little Engliſh. Where neither of theſe opportunities can be afforded, there are many inſtances of ſpelling books in our language being found in their houſes, and copies for writing, purchaſed by thoſe who imagine they may acquire the branches of knowledge by their own private application. The preſent

preſent aſſeſſor of the taxes, paid by the natives in the town of Calcutta, has not only perſonally witneſſed all theſe particulars, but has been engaged in the inſtruction of the children of ſome natives of diſtinction.

THE Hindoos of all ranks are extremely averſe to part with their money, except to the Brahmins: the teachers appointed behoved, therefore, to be provided with a ſalary to be increaſed by the contribution of ſuch natives as could afford to pay for the inſtruction of their child. In every other caſe, the benefit of knowledge would be more acceptable to the natives by being conferred gratuitouſly.

IN this manner the children of half a million of people in Calcutta might be taught to read and write: and a foundation laid for putting into their hands plain inſtructive books of morality and natural religion: and he pays Chriſtianity a bad compliment, who imagines, that it will not recommend itſelf to ſuch as are tolerably acquainted with theſe ſubjects.

THERE has always been much difficulty in finding ſober and diligent Europeans, willing to confine their proſpects to the painful drudgery of teaching in India. The taſk of inſtructing the native children might probably prove the moſt irkſome of any. The proſpect of making a large fortune in the cotton, ſilk, or indigo buſineſs, however uncertain, has always

ways ſufficient attractions to withdraw perſons of education from a line of life unjuſtly deemed unimportant and degrading.

In the preſent circumſtances, this obſtacle could eaſily be ſurmounted in Calcutta. The children born to Europeans by native women, are every year increaſing in number, and employment for them will ſoon become a matter of ſerious attention: they are at preſent excluded by the regulations, from any appointment in the ſervice of the Company, civil or military. Their education, and their limited ambition, ſeem to point them out as the moſt proper perſons for the tuition of the native children; while their numbers are more than ſufficient to ſupply every appointment of this kind, which either the benevolence, piety, or zeal of the preſent age appear likely to ſuggeſt. The contemplation of a meaſure of this kind, is the more pleaſing; becauſe if it ſhall ever be adopted, it will place in a uſeful profeſſion a numerous claſs of unfortunate youth, who for no fault of their own, have been abandoned by their progenitors on one ſide; and on account of their Chriſtian education, excluded from the ſociety of thoſe on the other. Had one half of the ſum been beſtowed in this manner, which has been expended in haranguing the ignorant multitude, by ſtill more ignorant miſſionaries, very different conſequences might have been the reſult: at all events, the contributors to the meaſure, would have the ſatisfaction of having the exerciſe of their benevolence, approved by that of their reaſon.

THE

THE MAHOMMEDAN FESTIVAL OF MOHURRUM.

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Calcutta, Jan. 1793.

THE ferocity and enthuſiaſm which characteriſes the Mahommedans in this country, is particularly diſplayed during the feſtival of Mohurrum. This is the name of the firſt month of their year, during the firſt ten days of which all the followers of the ſect of Ali, lament the death of Imaum Hoſſein, the ſecond ſon of that prophet, by Fatima.

ON the death of Ali, who was aſſaſſinated, a different houſe ſucceeded to the Caliphat; in the reign of Yezzed, the ſecond of his family, the inhabitants of Cufa ſent an embaſſy to Hoſſein at Medina, to requeſt him to aſſume the government, and to aſſure him of their ſupport. Hoſſein, upon this invitation, ſet out from Cufa with his family, and a conſiderable number of troops. Yezzed receiving intelligence of

his march, diſpatched after him an army of 10,000 men, which occupying the ground between him and the river Euphrates, cut off his ſupply of water. This event, in the ſultry climate of Meſopotamia, where life even with that neceſſary article, can ſcarcely be ſupported againſt the exceſſive heat, brought on the criſis of his fate. His adherents terrified at the proſpect of periſhing with thirſt, forſook him in ſuch numbers, that he ſoon found himſelf at the head of only a ſmall retinue of ſeventy-two perſons, chiefly his relations.

After ſuffering various diſtreſſes, and encountering ſeveral ſkirmiſhes, this ſmall, but determined band, was ſurrounded on the tenth of Mohurrum by the army of Yezzed, and entirely cut to pieces. In this little troop, Aſher, the infant ſon of Hoſſein, was killed by an arrow, in the arms of his father: and Hoſſein himſelf at laſt fell, exhauſted with fatigue, and fainting under numberleſs wounds. His tent was plundered, his women inſulted, and his head was carried to Damaſcus, the reſidence of his rival Yezzed.

All theſe events are repreſented by the Muſſulmans and their prieſts during the Mohurrum; on the firſt day of which the latter mount the pulpits, and begin the recital of the life and actions of Ali, and his ſons Haſſun and Hoſſein, deſcribing particularly the melancholy circumſtances that attended the fate of the latter, with all the pathos of which their elo-

eloquence is ſuſceptible. The effect of theſe harrangues on the enthuſiaſtic multitude is remarkable; they ſtrike their breaſts with frantic violence; they weep; they exclaim, ah Hoſſein, *Heif az Hoſſein*, alas for Hoſſein! Some parts of this tragical ſtory are in verſe, and recited or ſung in a doleful cadence.

During each day of the ſolemnity, ſome particular act of the ſtory is repreſented by people ſelected for perſonating the different characters concerned. Effigies, and large machines are carried in proceſſion through the ſtreets: crowds follow, perſonating the armies of Yezzed, and of Hoſſein, each under their reſpective banners and enſigns. One pageant repreſents the Caliph Yezzed ſeated on a magnificent throne, and ſurrounded by his guards: every part of the machinery, though conſtructed merely for the occaſion, is burniſhed with ſilver and gold; and in point of grandeur, and ſplendid ſcenery, the whole exhibition probably ſurpaſſes the ſhowy proceſſions in the Roman Catholic countries of Europe.

On ſome occaſions, the ſacred pigeons, which the pious Muſſulmans believe carried the news of Hoſſein's death to Medina, are repreſented with their beaks dipped in blood, as a confirmation of their intelligence: on other days the horſes, on which Hoſſein and his brother Abbas, are ſuppoſed to have rode, are repreſented to the people, and are painted

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as covered with wounds, and ſtuck full of arrows. By theſe repreſentations the zeal of the multitude is raiſed to a degree of ardor approaching to phrenzy; ſome voluntarily inflict wounds upon themſelves; ſome engage in conflicts with daggers and ſwords, and ſeem to court death: many in the courſe of the Mohurrum are ſlain; and as often as this happens, it is their uniform belief, that the ſouls of the deceaſed are inſtantaneouſly waſted to Paradiſe. The pious Mahommedan, it is ſaid, abſtains almoſt entirely from water during the ten days of this ſolemnity, in commemoration of the dreadful ſufferings endured by this Saint from the want of that element; many abſtain from the bath, and from changing their cloaths during that period of ſorrow. On the tenth day the coffins of thoſe ſlain in battle are brought forth, ſtained with blood; on them are laid the ſcimitar and turban of the deceaſed, adorned with feathers. After the corps have been ſolemnly interred, the prieſts mount the pulpit, and again read the tragical hiſtory; and the whole ſervice is concluded with pious curſes and imprecations upon the Caliph Yezzed, and all his adherents.

Hossein.—This holy Imaum is believed not only to have been a ſaint, but a martyr; and throughout the whole hiſtory he is dignified with the appellation of *Shehéed*, (martyr). It is their firm belief alſo, that he foreknew his deſtiny, but ſuffered a voluntary death, as an expiation for the ſins of all who believe in his name, and are the faithful followers of

Ali.

Ali. All, therefore, who truly lament the death of their Imaum, or piouſly commemorate his ſufferings, it is held, ſhall find acceptance at the day of judgement, and the remiſſion of their ſins. So great was his power, it is aſſerted, that had Hoſſein exerciſed the divine energy communicated to him, the whole world could not have prevailed againſt him; but on his part his ſufferings and death was voluntary, that his followers might obtain everlaſting life. Hence among the followers of Ali, it is an eſſential point of faith, that at the day of judgement, Fatima, the mother of the two ſaints Haſſun and Hoſſein, will preſent herſelf before the throne of God, with the head of the latter in one hand, and the heart of the former in the other, demanding abſolution and pardon in their name, for the followers of Ali; nor is it doubted that God will grant her requeſt.

The ſplendor and magnificence with which this ſolemnity is obſerved in Perſia*, and throughout Hindoſtan, conſtitutes an article of heavy expence to individuals. The Nabob of Bengal laſt year expended on the pageantry of this ceremony what would have been an independent fortune to a moderate man; and even the common people, his nominal ſubjects, diſcovered a liberality in their contributions which they never diſplay on any other occaſion.

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* Franklin's obſervations on a tour to Perſia.

A ceremony ſo ſplendid and expenſive, accompanied with a degree of zeal far more ardent than they have witneſſed among themſelves, fails not to attract the notice of Europeans. They generally turn out on their firſt viſit to India, to ſee the ſpectacle and combats during the Mohurrum; and no one who feels an intereſt in human happineſs, can be an unconcerned ſpectator. The pious muſt lament, that ſo much zeal ſhould be directed to a wrong object; and that a faith ſo lively ſhould be unſupported by truth. Every man, friendly to the intereſts of virtue, muſt regret that future happineſs, or the favour of heaven, ſhould be held up as attainable by other means than the practice of piety or morality.

In a political view, the celebration of the Mohurrum for ſo long a period as ten days, muſt be regarded as pernicious to induſtry, and expenſive to the people; while the gentle and humane affections, which every good government ſhould cheriſh, muſt be weakened or effaced by the annual repreſentation of maſſacre and bloodſhed.

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Mirzapour, Dec. 12, 1797.

In order to have a more complete knowledge of the practical rites in ſuch univerſal reſpect in this country, I this day went to hear prayers from a celebrated devotee of that claſs, called Faqueers among the native Mahommedans, and Saniaſſee by the Hindoos. The profeſſion ſomewhat reſembles that of the Mendicant Friars in Europe: it is aſſumed by all the claſſes as well as the Brahmins; and ſeems to be adopted chiefly from indolence and pride operating on weak minds. This religious man has long attracted the veneration of the ignorant; and the means he practiſes for this purpoſe ſeem perfectly ſuited to operate upon minds of their ſlender and dark complexion.

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His face was painted red, interſperſed with white patches; his body covered with robes adorned with ſhining ſhells and rings; his whole countenance and manner indicated a mixture of vanity and frantic pride which defies language to expreſs. He diſcovered evident marks of ſatisfaction at our coming to viſit him; and ſeemed to entertain no doubt that we felt much veneration for his ſacred perſon. He offered up prayers to the Supreme Being, in our favour, if thoſe howlings and frightful geſticulations which he exhibited, can merit that appellation. He held ſeveral holy manuſcripts of Sanſcrit Scripture in his hands, which he frequently pretended to read, but to us he appeared totally blind, and is ſaid to have never been capable even in his youth to read that language. His long beard was of immenſe bulk, and plaited with additional hair, ſo as to tie in wreaths about his neck.

This frantic votary of ſuperſtition conſtantly ſat in a ſmall incloſure reſembling a pig ſtye; and oppoſite to him there ſtood a ſmall altar covered with various images of the gods, who are the objects of popular worſhip. Behind him ſtood a ſacred cow, which the piety of the natives enabled him to keep well fed, and in good order. In his company there are always two or three natives, who ſeemed to feel peculiar admiration of his ſanctity, and who, it is ſaid, were receiving initiatory inſtruction, as a preparation for embracing the ſame profeſſion. Vows of abſtinence, and of celibacy, are uſually taken on entering

entering into this holy order, which appear to have been the original of the monaſtic vows ſo well known in Europe. Indeed, the corruptions of Chriſtianity among every ignorant people, aſſume a ſtrong reſemblance to the ſuperſtitious obſervances of the Hindoos. There is in both the ſame ignorance and contempt of moral duties; the ſame veneration for images, holy water, and frivolous rites; the ſame diſcrimination of days, of food; and a ſimilar multiplicity of objects of worſhip.

THE Faqueer, of whom I now ſpeak, on being offered money, diſplays anger, and a contempt for that article, too marked to be ſincere: his reaſons for refuſing it, were however ſufficiently plauſible: 'What need, ſaid he, have I of money? I no ſooner appear among the people, than they pioufly ſupply me with every thing I want; I am as independent as a king.' When his ſmall ſtore of ſubſiſtence is exhauſted, he ſallies forth from his cell into the public market-place, uttering the frantic geſticulations and cries of his piety. There the multitude crowd around, and give ſmall contributions of money and proviſions; and ſo deep is their ignorance and deluſion, that this is a ſource of ſupply which he can never exhauſt. It is extremely unfortunate, that the induſtry and wealth of the people ſhould thus be ſubjected to a continual waſte, which, in its effects, can only contribute to confirm their ignorance, and ſtrengthen the ties of ſlavery, by adding to them the bonds of ſuperſtition. Hardly any claſs of the people is pro-

hibited from embracing this idle and pernicious life; and while indolence and pride are predominant features in every character of Aſia, they muſt operate as powerful motives for its adoption *.

SEVERAL young perſons attended this religious cell, with a view of initiation to its rites; they are diſtinguiſhed by their perfect nakedneſs, and the expoſure of thoſe parts of which modeſty enjoins the concealment. Their numbers are in ſome of the upper provinces ſo great, that the patient and credulous liberality of the natives is inadequate to their ſupport; from want, therefore, they iſſue from their retreats in the woods and mountains, to the annoyance of all induſtry in the diſtrict; and their ſuppreſſion by military force is one of the moſt frequent and arduous efforts of the police.

THEIR number even here is conſiderable; but as they generally are ſingle individuals, they make few violent attacks upon property. Adjoining the cell, which I have attempted to deſcribe, there is another devotee ſeen ſitting in the open air upon the ruin of an old Hindoo temple, which has been undermined by the Ganges. He alſo is in *puris naturalibus*, only his body is waſhed over with a compoſition of aſhes and cow dung; and he is remarkable for a vow that he has made of living upon aſhes as his food. This

* Their number has been eſtimated at 110,000.

This aſtoniſhing violation of the dictates of nature, it is ſaid, he faithfully adheres to, only uſing the neceſſary precaution of mixing up his aſhes with a little ſweet milk. Sitting in ſackcloth and aſhes, was a well known expreſſion of ſorrow and repentance among the Jews: how far they may have been indebted to the Hindoos for its origin, I do not pretend to determine. It is certain that many of the cuſtoms of Hindoſtan nearly reſemble thoſe of ancient Egypt and Judea; and the conjecture that theſe nations, and after them the Europeans, have derived much of their knowledge, and many cuſtoms from India, is daily receiving eſtabliſhment from new facts and reſemblances, diſcovered in this country.

THE antiquity of the Hindoo religion, learning, and civil inſtitutions, is, I believe, at preſent conteſted by no perſon of information; while the extent of their attainments, and the value of their acquiſitions is conſtantly controverted upon more ſolid grounds. Hardly a ſingle art in Europe has derived its improvement from our knowledge of India. The religion, aſtronomy, juriſprudence, and moral ſcience of the country is daily becoming better underſtood, but nothing has yet been found ſuperior, or even equal to our own. And it is farther to be remarked, that every thing valuable in knowledge is here confined to the few. From every thing like ſcience, the vulgar are wholly excluded, as a boon to them uncommunicable. To the rational comforts

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of religion, they are utter ſtrangers, unleſs the obſervance of the painful ceremonies of their ſuperſtition by ſoothing their terrified imagination, or gratifying their religious pride, can come under that idea.

The exaggerations of Oriental attainments in ſcience and learning, which ſo often appear in print, are to be aſcribed to that admiration and ſurpriſe with which men view monuments of ancient taſte and literature. Contemptible as the progreſs of Hindoo ſcience and religious knowledge has been, when compared to the duration of that people, they are ſtill entitled to our indulgence and reſpect. For, whatever reaſon we may have to regard the religion we profeſs, as more dignified in its origin, and more rational in its precepts, we ought not to look upon the ſincere believers of another, with ſeverity or contempt. To hate or deſpiſe any people, becauſe they do not profeſs the ſame faith with ourſelves, or becauſe they have not made the ſame attainments in knowledge, is to violate the humane and liberal ſpirit of our own ſyſtem; which enjoins charity and benevolence to all. If, of them to whom much has been given, much ſhall be required; forbearance and mutual love muſt be expected from Chriſtians on the moſt equitable grounds; becauſe theſe duties conſtitute a fundamental part of their religion.

In my different ſtrictures on the Hindoo manners, I have purpoſely avoided any diſcuſſion of their abſtract theological tenets, and their ſimilarity or difference

ference with thoſe of Egypt and Greece. Theſe enquiries have ever appeared the moſt fruitleſs and unprofitable in the whole field of ſcience. To purſue the abſurd fictions and puerile wanderings of the human mind in rude ages upon this myſterious ſubject, is a difficult taſk; and though attainable, is perhaps the leaſt uſeful upon which the mind can be employed. We are as yet too little acquainted with Sanſcrit books, to determine what was the ſtate of religion in Hindoſtan in the earlier ages; and when a more complete knowledge of theſe writings is attained, we ſhall probably diſcover a few well known ſentiments diſguiſed by a mixture of abſurdity and error; and ſhall find that the Hindoos, as well as every other people, have, by the improvements of ſcience, reached the knowledge of ſome uſeful truths, while in other inſtances, they have been led aſtray by its illuſions.

It is comfortable to reflect, that amidſt ſo deep a gloom of ignorance and ſuperſtition, in which ſo many millions of our fellow creatures in this part of the world are involved, there ſhould be found ſo little ſubverſive of ſociety, and ſo much that ſeems to promote its ends. Human victims to appeaſe divine wrath, are not now often ſacrificed in any part of Hindoſtan, whatever might have been practiſed in ruder periods. The offerings made at the temples, conſiſt of money, fruit, flowers, rice, incenſe,

incenſe, and ſpices, with the offering * made at the new and full moon, on account of the dead, called the *ſradha*.

In their ſacred writings, mention is made of the ſacrifice of the Horſe, of the White Elephant, of the Bull, and even of Man: but the animal to be ſacrificed muſt, to be acceptable, have ſo many peculiarities, that it can never be found. This humane commentary of the Brahmins precludes the exerciſe of cruelty †.

It is fortunate, that in a country where the great body of the people are occupied by the rites of a worſhip ſo groſs and illiberal, a few ſhould retain a knowledge of the Supreme Being, and worſhip him without the intervention of images, in a manner ſuited to his nature. The followers of the Narganny Pooja, or worſhip of the inviſible, are deiſts; men of cultivated minds, on whom the groſs fables of the Brahmins have no hold. One of them, a perſon of rank and property in Calcutta, informed me, that ſeveral men of rank and education were of that perſuaſion, and acknowledged no deities but the Creator and Governor of the world; whoſe ſervice was the obſervance of the laws of morality. In every country, the progreſs of knowledge moderates, and

* Vide Sketches of the manners of the Hindoos.

† Aſiatic Reſearches, Sir W. Jones' Diſcourſes.

and ſometimes overpowers ſuperſtition among the ſuperior ranks.

THOUGH ſuperſtition mixes with every action of an Hindoo's life, yet there are ſtated times for public worſhip, at which the people, after having bathed, reſort to the temple. When they come from the Tank, they leave their ſlippers on its bank, and are admitted to a veſtibule before the temple, where the idols are placed. There amidſt the profound reverence of the people, the Brahmins perform the ceremonies of worſhip; whilſt the dancing women perform their exerciſe in the court, ſinging at the ſame time the praiſes of the divinity, to the ſound of various inſtruments.

THE Hindoos, in the exerciſe of individual and private devotion, as well as public, ſound a bell, and blow a conch or ſhell. There too, they have an idol of gold, or ſilver, or wood, placed upon a throne; a cenſer is kept continually burning. The idol is waſhed in a metal baſon; and cups containing rice, fruit, and ſweetmeats, are placed before it; in the mean time, the worſhipper is repeating his prayers; and the Brahmin, after having marked the forehead of the idol with a colouring ſubſtance, impoſes a ſimilar one on the worſhipper. Hence, in walking along the ſtreets, you meet the people with marks of various ſhapes and colours, according to the ſect and tribe of each. The

ceremony

ceremony concludes by dividing the fruit and ſweet-meats among thoſe preſent, and carefully wrapping up the idol and his throne, which are laid up till another act of worſhip is to be performed.

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Allahabad, 1798.

THE muſſulman, probably owes his ignorance of all polite learning, more to the excluſive zeal and bigotry of his religious ſyſtem, than to any defect of nature. All knowledge but that of the Coran, to him appears not only profane, but heretical and ſinful. Thoſe who differed from the all-ſufficient ſyſtem of his faith, were deemed not merely contemptible, but odious: thence his pious enthuſiaſm decreed war and deſtruction againſt mankind, and the recorded knowledge of paſt ages. A competent knowledge of the arts and ſciences, beſides its intrinſic value, and the immediate advantages it conſers upon ſociety, generally beſtows alſo its beſt ornaments. Generoſity, politeneſs and humanity, have always been the attendants, if not the effects of literature.

Scilicet ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros.

HAD the Roman poet lived in our days, he might have illuſtrated his maxim by the hiſtory of the Moguls: their ignorance and contempt of learning has ever been accompanied with cruelty and barbarity to the vanquiſhed: When that people, under Zengis, had ſubdued the northern provinces of China, it was ſeriouſly propoſed, not in the hour of victory and paſſion, but in calm deliberate council, to exterminate all the inhabitants of that populous country. The execution of this horrid deſign was averted, by the dextrous management of a mandarin, who engaged their avarice in behalf of his countrymen, by repreſenting the immenſe riches theſe provinces would yield by the produce of their manufactures.

"IN the cities of Aſia, ſays Mr Gibbon*, the inhuman abuſe of the rights of war, was exerciſed with a regular form of diſcipline: The inhabitants who had ſubmitted to their diſcretion, were ordered to evacuate their houſes, and to aſſemble in ſome plain adjacent to the city; when a diviſion was made of the vanquiſhed into three parts. The firſt claſs conſiſted of the ſoldiers of the garriſon, and of the young men capable of bearing arms; and their fate was inſtantly decided: They were either enliſted among the Moguls, or they were maſſacred on the ſpot, who, with pointed ſpears, and bended bows, had formed a circle round the captive multitude. The ſecond claſs compoſed

* Decline and fall of the Roman empire, vol. 3d, p. 367.

compoſed of the young and beautiful women, of the artificers of every rank and profeſſion, of the more wealthy or honourable citizens, from whom a private ranſom might be expected, was diſtributed in equal and proportionable lots. The remainder, whoſe life or death was alike uſeleſs to the conquerors, were permitted to return to the city; which in the mean time had been ſtripped of its valuable furniture; and a tax was impoſed on thoſe wretched inhabitants for the indulgence of breathing their native air.

"SUCH was the behaviour of the Moguls, when they were not conſcious of any extraordinary rigour. But the moſt caſual provocation, the ſlighteſt motive of caprice or convenience, (he might have added zeal) often provoked them to maſſacre a whole people. The ruin of ſome flouriſhing cities was executed with ſuch unrelenting perſeverance, that, according to their own expreſſion, horſes might run without ſtumbling on the ground where they once ſtood. The three great capitals Khoraſſan, Maru, Neiſabour, and Herat, were deſtroyed by the armies of Zengis; and the exact account, which was taken of the ſlain, amounted to 4,347,000 perſons."

Timur, the founder of the dynaſty lately on the throne, was educated in a leſs barbarous age, and in the profeſſion of the Mahomedan faith; but the zeal of the miſſionary ſeems to have ſilenced the dictates of humanity. His profeſt admirer and hiſtorian, Sherefeddin Aly, informs us that he maſſacred in his camp

camp before Delhi, 100,000 Indian priſoners who had ſmiled when the army of their countrymen appeared in their ſight. Several lofty towers were erected by him of human ſculls; and, for theſe ſtructures, Iſpahan furniſhed 70,000, while Bagdat was condemned after a revolt to ſupply 90,000 heads*. In imitating ſuch ſavage monſters of his nation, the celebrated Attila might juſtly aſſume the well-earned epithet of the Scourge of God, as a title of his royal dignity. Did not our own experience, and the preſent conduct of the Moguls, ſo ſtrongly countenance theſe facts recorded in hiſtory, it would be almoſt impoſſible to yield our aſſent to their truth. Since the arrival of many Europeans now in India, actions equally barbarous have been committed under their eye, though the weakneſs of the preſent Mahommedan princes may have confined the extent of their cruelty to a narrower ſpace. The fortune of war has placed ſeveral European and native detachments in the power of Hyder Ali and of Tippoo, and the treatment they in general received was equally inhuman, and perhaps as incredible as any of the above. In detailing facts that ſo deeply affect the character of a whole people, you have a right to the beſt authority. I ſhall gladly relieve myſelf from the reſponſibility, by giving you the very words of a reſpectable officer, who has been himſelf a witneſs to the ſufferings he deſcribes, and which he has had the misfortune to ſhare.

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* Idem, in a note, p. 368.

"THE Chief, to whom Colonel Baillie held up the flag of truce, treated it at firſt with contempt, and at the ſame time endeavoured to cut off the Colonel. A few minutes after this, our men received orders to lay down their arms, with an intimation that quarter would be granted. This order was no ſooner complied with, than the enemy ruſhed upon them in the moſt ferocious manner: ſeven eighths of the whole were put to the ſword; and but for the humane interpoſition of the French commanders, Lally and Pimoran, who implored and inſiſted with the conquerors to ſhew mercy, the gallant remains of our little army muſt have fallen a ſacrifice to that ſavage thirſt of blood with which the tyrant diſgraced his victory.

"WHILE the enemy's horſe and elephants marched again and again in barbarian triumph over the field of battle, the wounded and bleeding Engliſh, who were not inſtantly trodden to death by the feet of theſe animals, lingered out a miſerable exiſtence, expoſed in the day to the burning rays of the vertical ſun, and in the night to the ravages of foxes, jackals, and tigers, allured to that horrid ſcene by the ſcent of human blood. Many officers, as well as privates, ſtripped of all that they had, after protracting hour after hour, and day after day, in pain, miſerably periſhed: others riſing, as it were from the dead, after an incredible loſs of blood, which induced for a time the moſt perfect inſenſibility and ſtupefaction, found means to rejoin their

friends

friends in chains, with whom they were deſtined for years to ſhare the horrors of a jail, rendered ſtill more dreadful by frequent apprehenſions of that aſſaſſination, which they had the moſt undoubted proofs, had been practiſed on numbers of their fellow ſufferers, diſperſed in different places of confinement, throughout the dominions of a barbarous enemy.

"MANY of theſe unfortunate officers were, in fact, cut off by poiſon, after ſuffering every indignity which the moſt wanton cruelty can inflict. Under theſe hardſhips, ſeveral died, and were caſt, not into a grave, but into a jungle, where the jackals devoured their emaciated carcaſes. Some were driven to madneſs, a few were compelled to embrace, at leaſt outwardly, the Mahommedan religion, and were forced to ſubmit to the diſgraceful rite of initiation. This was in general the fate of the boys; who were intended to recruit and improve the army of the conqueror. Their lot was, perhaps, the moſt excruciating of all; ſince it was embittered, not merely by perſonal ſuffering, but by a feeling of degradation and ſelf-reproach for their involuntary apoſtacy. As often as they were ſeen by their countrymen, from the jail, performing the exerciſe under the laſh of their maſters, and in Mahommedan dreſs, tears of ſhame, rather than from pain, were ſeen to drop from their eyes.

"THAT

"THAT this treatment was not more characteriſtic of the tyrant's cruelty, than that of his ſlaves, the priſoners witneſſed many mortifying proofs. The men who carried the *doolies* of the ſick, as well as ſome others of the lower caſts of people in Hyder's dominions, frequently reviled them in terms too groſs to be repeated. They told them that they ſhould be forced to eat their own dung, and expreſſed their hope, "that when they arrived at the place of deſtination, Hyder would not fail to put them to death."

YOU will, from declamations you hear againſt European rapacity in the Eaſt, be led to attribute theſe ſeverities to the antipathy, or revenge of the Myſorean king; but it does not appear, that in ſimilar circumſtances, he would have treated his countrymen, or even his own ſubjects with greater humanity. The emperors of Hindoſtan have always been in the habit of treating their enemy with cruelty; and the head of a fallen foe has ever been the moſt grateful preſent a dutiful ſubject could offer to his ſovereign. Stratagems, treaſons, and maſſacre, comprehend the whole ſcope and range of Indian politics; nor is the man who ſucceſsfully practiſes them, regarded with ſo much abhorrence as admiration. When a deſpot dies, hereditary ſucceſſion is not ſo invariably the rule of ſupplying the vacant throne, as the power or addreſs of the competitors: and the elevation of a ſon to the Muſnud is the ſignal of death to all his brothers. During the moſt

flouriſhing

flouriſhing period of the Mogul Empire, the hypocritical Aurengzebe wreſted the ſceptre from his own father *; and impriſoned him for life in his palace, by the inſtrumentality of his grandſon. While the uſurper committed this outrage againſt filial duty, he was religiouſly worſhipping at the tomb of his grandfather Acber; and, as the reward of his treaſon, he enjoyed the throne of Hindoſtan for near half a century, and tranſmitted his name as an example, not as a warning, to his poſterity. The preſent emperor, after having his eyes put out by his rebellious ſubjects, ſuffered daily indignities worſe than death to a mind of any ſenſibility.

THE preſent Nabob of Oude, after the elevation of his brother, had frequent attempts made againſt his life by poiſon; which he endeavoured in vain to retaliate in the ſame manner; nor have either of theſe intended aſſaſſins forfeited the eſteem or allegiance of their ſubjects. It is firmly believed, that the ſhort reign of Vizier Ali, which intervened between that of the brothers, was marked by two different attempts to murder the Engliſh officers, and the Governor-General. Colonel Dow, unable to deny this propenſity to cruelty, or controvert ſuch a train of facts, endeavours to palliate it by urging the neceſſity laid upon every individual of royal birth, who has no alternative between a throne or a grave; but

* Shah Jehan; vide Dow's Hiſt. Hindoſt.

but this very neceſſity originates in the cruel maxims of Mogul government; and the dreadful effect of cruelty, is by him inadvertently held up to palliate its guilt.

* * * * * * * * * *

Mirzapour, Dec. 9, 1798.

An European on firſt beholding the cottages of the Hindoos, is ſtruck with the meanneſs of their appearance. The whole ſtock of furniture and clothing of a family, make a very humble ſtore to ſupply the wants of ſix or eight perſons: but theſe wants are in general proportioned to the means of ſupply, and in a year of ordinary plenty, a native of this country is not much more at a loſs for the neceſſaries of life than an European. A family that has never drank any thing ſtronger than water, nor eat a more ſubſtantial meal than rice and vegetables, is placed as nearly as human beings can be beyond the reach of fortune.

Amidst all their penury, therefore, the Hindoos apparently enjoy a larger ſhare of domeſtic comfort than could be looked for in ſuch circumſtances. The

The members of a family, like thoſe of the ſtate, pay implicit ſubmiſſion to the head of it; and look up to him with great reſpect. There are here few inſtances of undutifulneſs to parents; ſo far otherwiſe, a ſon will not ſit down in the preſence of his father, unleſs he receives his command ſo to do. The women are remarkable for gentleneſs and ſubmiſſion: their ſeclufion from ſociety is, among the lower ranks, but partially inforced*, and where it is moſt rigidly adhered to, probably occaſions little regret, as ideas of happineſs are much influenced by habit; and a Hindoo female is equally ſurpriſed how enjoyment ſhould be found in company, as an European lady can be at her bearing the horrors of confinement. Expoſed to few of the aſperities of life, and ſtrangers to ambition, a native family enjoys not only tranquillity, but contentment and cheerfulneſs; and even under deſpotic government, is perhaps leſs frequently diſturbed in its noiſeleſs tenor of life, than one in the ſame ſphere in Europe.

In the private merrymakings of the Hindoos, great uſe is made of muſical inſtruments, as well as vocal performances.

* From every enquiry I have made of the inhabitants in the interior parts of India, I find where there are few ſtrangers they do not confine their women. The people are naturally ſhy, and from religious prejudices refrain from intercourſe with ſtrangers. Dr Robertſon is probably well founded in his conjecture, that the degree of reſtraint in which the Hindoo women are kept, is borrowed from their Mahommedan conquerors.

performances. The airs are ſimple and not unpleaſant. Fire works have been a principal amuſement at public rejoicings from the earlieſt periods. Fire balls, or blue lights, employed in beſieged places, to obſerve the motions and poſitions of the enemy during the night, are in uſe all over India, and in greater perfection than in Europe. In thoſe parts that have never been viſited by Europeans or Mahommedans, rockets are found, a weapon almoſt of univerſal uſe in Indian war. This inſtrument conſiſts of a tube of iron about eight inches long, and an inch and a half in diameter, cloſed at one end. It is filled and faſtened to a bamboo about the thickneſs of a walking cane, and about four feet long, which is pointed with iron. At the oppoſite end of the tube from this point, is the match: the man who uſes it, points the end of the ſhaft which is ſhod with iron, to the object at which he aims; and ſetting fire to the match, it flies off with great velocity. From the irregularity of its motion, the rocket is difficult to be avoided, and it ſometimes acts with conſiderable effect, eſpecially among cavalry.

The late embaſſy to China, has eſtabliſhed the great proficiency made by that people, in every ſpecies of fire-work, and particularly in their nocturnal illuminations; yet it does not appear, that either they or the Hindoos were acquainted with the uſe of artillery before the Europeans. In the Gentoo laws, there is a prohibition of the uſe of fire arms, but the words ſo tranſlated, may be equally truly rendered

arms

arms of *fire*. Mention is made in Sanſcrit of ſhetagney, or the weapon that kills an hundred men at once, which has been tranſlated cannon; but theſe expreſſions afford hardly any proof the Hindoos being poſſeſſed of ſuch a diſcovery. Guns are now uſed over all Hindoſtan, and had they been equally common at the period when the country was firſt viſited by Europeans, there can hardly be a doubt that they would have attracted their obſervation.

THE final ſolution of that queſtion which has been conſiderably agitated of late, whether the eaſtern or European nations firſt underſtood the uſe of fire arms, will probably reſt in favour of the latter; a ſubſtance poſſeſſing many of the properties of gun powder, was known in Aſia long previous to its diſcovery in Europe, but it does not appear to have been applied much to the improvement of the art of war, and for the uſe of artillery, not at all.

SEVERAL changes in that art are however certainly introduced in Aſia. The uſe of chariots is frequently mentioned in the Sanſcrit writings, and from theſe it appears that the infantry were placed in the center, cavalry on each flank of the army, and beyond theſe chariots of war.

THE

* Vide the Heetopades, tranſlated by Mr Wilkins. Quintus Curtius mentions the ſame fact, lib. 3. c. 14.

The Hindoo code contains ſeveral regulations, which may be regarded as their law of nations, and which characteriſes them as a humane, and in ſome reſpects a civilized people. It prohibits not only the weapons termed fire-arms, but all poiſoned inſtruments. It forbids alſo violence to all incapable of defence, or who ſolicit quarter. It forbids the ſlaughter of any one who has no means of eſcape; of a perſon who is ſitting down; of him who is naked, or aſleep; and in ſhort of every perſon not actually engaged in hoſtilities.

The inſtitutions of the Hindoos, like thoſe of every other nation in an imperfect ſtate of improvement, retain, along with theſe humane proviſions, an unſeemly mixture of their priſtine barbariſm. Trial by ordeal, which was formerly ſo common among the half civilized nations of Europe, ſtill keeps its place in the Hindoſtanee code: various ſpecies of this trial are there particularized, and the preciſe mode of conducting them defined. Fire or water is moſt uſually employed, but other methods are ſometimes adopted by choice of the parties *. A perſon of rank being accuſed of correſponding with the enemy in time of war, thus writes; "Let my accuſer be produced; let me ſee him face to face; let the moſt venemous ſnakes be put into a pot; let us put our

* Vide Aſiatic Reſearches, where this mode of trial is deſcribed at large.

our hands into it together; let it be covered for a certain time; and he who remains unhurt ſhall be innocent."

A mode of trial which leaves the deciſion of a cauſe to chance, or the immediate interpoſition of a miraculous power, certainly indicates a ſtate of ſociety not far advanced in the ſcience of juriſprudence. Yet when the cauſe is perplexed, ſuch an appeal ſeems natural enough to a ſimple people. It was adopted by the Jews in an early period: and among them it was accompanied, as it is here, with all the ſolemnity of a religious ceremony, to render it more awful and impreſſive upon the minds of the parties.

THERE ſeems to be a conſiderable ſimilarity between ſome of the rites and religious obſervances of the Jews and the eaſtern nations. The Sanniaſſes or Faqueers, who ſeparate themſelves from the reſt of mankind, in conſequence of a vow, reſemble the Nazarites among the Jews, whoſe conduct was regulated by certain legal injunctions. Vide Numb. ch. ii. v. 2. "Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, when either man or woman ſhall ſeparate themſelves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to ſeparate themſelves unto the Lord, &c."—v. 5. "All the days of the vow of his ſeparation there ſhall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in which he ſeparateth to the Lord, he ſhall be holy, and ſhall let the locks of the hair of his head

head grow."—v. 6. "All the days that he ſeparateth himſelf unto the Lord he ſhall come at no dead body." This particular relating to approaching a dead body, is ſtrictly a part of Hindoo manners at preſent. A party coming from the Ganges with water, if met by a dead perſon carried thither, pour out the water as impure, and bring another load.

THE law of retaliation was obſerved among both nations: both were diſpoſed to ſubſtitute certain rites, inſtead of religious duty: circumciſion is the initiatory ceremony to the religion of both; and a Jew, as well as a Muſſulman, reſted his hope of ſalvation upon that, and other obſervances equally frivolous. It required ſtrong efforts on the part of the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity, to convince the former that rectitude of conduct was of more importance than outward ſhow; and that "neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion availeth any thing, but a new creature." We find that they, as well as other uninformed nations, paid a ſuperſtitious regard to certain days, and entertained an averſion to certain ſpecies of food; though in this they were not encouraged, but diſavowed by their beſt teachers who declared "their faſts, their new moons*, and their ſabbaths to be an abomination." The ſimple doctrine which teaches to "ceaſe to do evil, and learn

* The Muſſulmans, as well as the Jews, pay a kind of worſhip to the new moon.

learn to do well," has been unpopular with the multitude in all countries. To them the belief of myſtery, and the practice of ſuperſtition is eaſy; but the reformation of life, is like the aſcent from hell, *Hic labor, hoc opus.*

OF THE STATE OF LITERATURE AMONG THE NATIVES OF INDIA.

. . . . . .

Allahabad, July 1797.

THE learning of the Hindoos and Muſſulmans, as to the quantum of it, has of late been the ſubject of much diſcuſſion. Parties have been formed, each with a ſyſtem to defend; one carrying their pretenſions to knowledge above all reaſonable bounds; and the other attempting to depreciate their attainments in ſcience to a ſtandard, perhaps, lower than the truth.

FEW of their books have yet been tranſlated into the European languages, or made the objects of impartial criticiſm. All their ſtock of knowledge, whether great or ſmall, is confined to the various manuſcripts, either preſerved in the public libraries, or in the cabinet of the learned.

THE

THE art of printing being unknown, or at leaſt never practiſed, literature in India has always neceſſarily been confined to a very narrow circle: the author of Seir Mutakhareen, giving an account of the learned men who flouriſhed in the time of Ali Verdi Khan, furniſhes a few hints that will ſerve as a baſis for forming an impartial eſtimate of the ſtate of Mahommedan literature. Whether his prejudices led him to overlook the Hindoo ſages of that period, or whether their want of merit rendered them unworthy of his notice, is a point which we do not venture to decide: the fact is certain that he particularizes none of the unbelievers.

THE firſt of this illuſtrious body who decorated the reign of Ali Verdi, was *Moluvy* * Naſſyr, born in the province of Behar. This man, we are told, was "a ſcholar of ſo great credit, that he followed his maſter into Perſia; and though his poverty obliged him to walk all the way on foot, he did not omit a leſſon any one day." His attainments are ſaid to have correſponded with this ardour of purſuit: for he is repreſented as profoundly verſed in aſtronomy, mathematics, and algebra. He attained to the rank of ſecond meſſenger from the Perſian Court, to carry its diſpatches to the governors on the frontier provinces towards India. He returned at laſt to India, where he obtained a jaghir in his native

* Moluvy is the title correſponding to Doctor.

tive province, near Patna, where his poſterity now live."

SUCH is the account given of this great man, by Golam Hoſſein Khan. With regard to his aſtronomy and algebra, it is to be obſerved, that theſe ſciences were chiefly employed in calculating nativities, and predicting future events, from the poſition of the heavenly bodies. According to this author's own teſtimony, every prince or governor of a province kept in his retinue a number of aſtrologers, whom he conſulted on every enterprize, nor would they move from their ſtation on the moſt urgent buſineſs till a favourable hour had been decided upon by theſe ſages. Even at preſent, after two hundred years intercourſe with the Engliſh, their appetite for divination and prophecy has not much abated. The Nabob of Oude conſults his aſtrologers what dreſs it will be moſt lucky to appear in each day; at what door he is to go out, and by which to enter his palace after an excurſion. The pooreſt of the people will ſtrip off their rags to engage a fortune-teller to declare their future deſtiny; and for this they will part with a dinner, though they may not have a meal beſides. Probably the greateſt merit of the celebrated Moluvy Naſſyr conſiſted in his knowing the language of the north of India, and interpreting to men in office from the Perſian Court.

THIS panegyriſt declares that he became "a proficient in the whole circle of the ſciences," ſpecifying the

the mathematics as one ſource of his renown; however you will recollect, that as there were at this period no fort regularly conſtructed in India, nor any tolerable train of artillery, the Rev. Moluvy's mathematics muſt have been chiefly ſpeculative.

THE next in rank among the Mahommedan ſcholars, is the ſon of Naſſyr, Daood Aaly Khan. It is ſaid of him, "that having obtained the whole paternal eſtate, by the partiality of his father, he portioned it out among the different members of the family, in the manner regulated by the laws of God*."

AFTER having in this manner arranged his affairs, we are informed, "that he felt himſelf fired with a deſire of viſiting the gate of the pontif of this world†: of beholding the completion of muſſulmaniſm ‡; and of kiſſing the threſhold of that door which is watched by hoſts of angels §.

"AFTER having enjoyed to his contentment the meaſure of happineſs after which his heart panted, he returned to the place of his nativity, and paſſed away his time in aſſiſting the Seyds and neceſſitous ‖. In the

* That is of the Coran.
† Nedjef. ‡ Mecca.
§ Medina, where is the tomb of Mahomet.
‖ Seyds are the deſcendents of Ali.

the number of cauſes daily brought before him for his deciſion, for he was both a caſuiſt and a magiſtrate, his ſole view was to cut ſhort differences to the ſatisfaction of both parties. He alſo contented himſelf with his legal fees; and this pittance, joined to his portion of the paternal eſtate, he managed with ſo much economy, as to enable him to relieve the needy, and to adminiſter comfort to widows and orphans whom he admitted to his table; without attempting to live on better fare in private by himſelf".

THIS alludes to the Indian method of giving entertainments: which if judged by our notions, is ſtrongly marked with indelicacy. The gueſts all ſit upon a ſquare carpet; the maſter of the feaſt being placed at the north ſide. A number of ſeparate diſhes are placed before him; and a different aſſortment leſs delicate along the two ſides, according to the rank of the gueſts. Towards the farther end of the carpetting, the gueſts of inferior note are ſeated, and the diſhes are, before them, greatly inferior both in number and quality. This management ſo indelicate, according to our ideas, was conſpicuous even at the tables of the moſt illuſtrious Romans. A different ſpecies of bread, and an inferior wine, were ſerved to the gueſts, from that uſed by the giver of the entertainment. Vide Juvenal. Sat.

"IT would be difficult" ſays the biographer on this ſubject, "to give him all the praiſe he deſerves, nor does the hiſtorian find any heſitation in acknowledging

ledging the impotence of his pen upon that extenſive ſubject. "It, however, ought not to be omitted, that after his return, and after having kiſſed the ſacred and ſublime threſhold, he altered his name from Daood Aali Khan, to that of Zair Hoſſein Khan, which he then aſſumed, and ever after gloried in the alteration."

It is common after a pilgrimage to aſſume a new name, with the title of ſaint; theſe names are ſtill more fantaſtical than thoſe appellations of our ſaints in the days of Oliver Cromwell. One perſon at Alahabad aſſumed the name of Shahcotta, or ſaint dog, the female of which cottee, has ſometimes been the title of religious women. Fame, however much it may be concealed from the religious devotees themſelves, ſeems to be the great end of their peregrinations, and vanity the motive for undertaking them.

This account which is written with ſome eloquence and much ſimplicity, I have conſiderably abridged; whatever impreſſion it makes with regard to the learning of the venerable perſon mentioned, it offers a very favourable idea of his moral character, and therefore the Moluvy will command eſteem from thoſe who may think differently from the noble author on the ſubject of his learning.

The third ornament of this period, according to our author, "was Meer Mahmod Alim, one of the moſt virtuous and moſt venerable perſons of Azimabad

bad (Patna). His knowledge was in much repute, and his compoſitions in much eſteem and celebrity; but I cannot ſpeak properly of them, having no perſonal knowledge of either."

THIS ſketch is truly characteriſtic of the learned in a country where the art of printing is unknown. An author of firſt celebrity has never been read by a learned nobleman, who was almoſt his contemporary. The Perſian news paper, (Acber) is ſtill in manuſcript, after an intercourſe with Europe of two hundred years.

"MOLUVY Mahmed Aaref is the fourth of the literary characters of the age; he was eminent for knowledge, and one of thoſe men fond of corners and retirement. He died early in the reign of Aliverdi Khan, and was entombed in the caſtle of Azimabad*, where he always reſided. One of his diſciples Shah Gurg †, was a pious man whom I have often ſeen. He lived at a diſtance from the world in ſolitude and celibacy, and ſpent his time in prayer.

"THE fifth was Meer Ruſtem-aaly, a man ſatisfied with his corner‡, but not deſtitute of ſcience and erudition: this at leaſt is the character given of him, by

* The tombs of religious muſſulmans are viſited by pilgrims; and are illuminated by perpetual lamps, placed in a niche at the end.

† Saint Wolf. ‡ Literally tranſlated.

by thoſe perſons, that much frequent religious men*. I know him but little: he paſſed for a man verſed in the Coran, and capable of all the ſubtleties of explanation.

"THE ſixth learned perſon was Shah Mahmed-amen, who lived in celibacy; a man much verſed in the Coran, and ſo very intelligent, as to be inferior only to an angel. Intent both interiorly and exteriorly on the ſervice of God, he ſeemed *brim-full of the rays of his maker's love*†. His words and actions made ſo much impreſſion on my mind, that when I went on the fame of his character to pay him a viſit, I felt within myſelf on entering his dwelling, ſuch a diſguſt at the avocations of this world, and ſo ſtrong an inclination to abandon this borrowed habitation, and to addict myſelf wholly to the love of God, that I had nearly taken a final reſolution on that ſubject. He paſſed the night in adoration and mortification, always awake, and ſleeping by day hardly a ſingle hour. His dwelling was conſtantly thronged by viſitors; while he was ſo intent upon the object of his love, and pronounced the ejaculation, *O my beloved!* with ſuch emphaſis, and drew from his breaſt ſuch deep ſobs, that the hearts of his viſitors were ſet on fire. Shah-Mahmed his maſter was celebrated at Azi-

 mabad

* Sovereign princes paid viſits to learned men; and proſtrated themſelves before them; and when viſited by them, they went to meet them, and placed them on the ſame muſnud.

† Perſian idiom, preſerved in this phraſe.

mabad for miracles and prodigies; and he for reading lectures publicly, when his temper ſoftened, for he was ſomewhat rough and paſſionate."

THERE are a few other ſages celebrated by this hiſtorian, but it is probable that you have by this time formed a tolerably accurate notion of the ſtate of ſcience among the conquerors of India: their celebrity is acquired and upheld by means exactly ſimilar to thoſe practiſed by our ſaints in the darkeſt ages of papal ignorance. The ſame merit is attached to their celibacy, their retirement from the world, their miracles and their devotion: and a ſimilar reverence, or rather worſhip is paid to their aſhes, as our learned and pious anceſtors paid to thoſe of St Dunſtan, or Thomas à Becket.

THE fame of ſaintſhip and profound learning, is perhaps more eaſily acquired among the higheſt claſſes in Aſia, than it ever was in Europe among the vulgar: for it is to be remembered, that the worthies here celebrated all lived in the preſent age, were of the higheſt rank, and enjoyed the admiration of princes.

No notice is taken of any Hindoos of literature by this author: nor is this probably owing to his bigotted attachment to Mahommedaniſm; it does not appear that there are any at preſent of ſufficient merit to entitle them to a place in his liſt, ſuch as it is.

WHEN

When ſuch are the acquiſitions of men of the higheſt rank and learning, you may conjecture the deplorable ſtate of ignorance in which the great body of the people are involved. They are deluded and plundered by every rude pretender to ſanctity: their religion conſiſts wholly of rites, and their ſcience of charms. To gain their admiration, it is ſufficient to aſſume a phantaſtic dreſs, and to utter ſobs and ejaculations.

Abul Fazel, the miniſter of Acber, ſubmitted to the tuition of learned pundits, for many years, and has written an abſtract of Hindoo ſcience at once inſipid, ſubtle, and unintelligible *. The ſame thing happened to Dara Sheko, the elder brother of Aurengzebe, who, after many years profound reſearch, has left a ſketch of his attainments, that demonſtrates nothing ſo much as the futility of his purſuit.

Sir William Jones himſelf, who carried on the ſtudy of Sanſcrit literature with greater ſucceſs than any other man, ſeems often bewildered, and becomes unintelligible to himſelf in purſuing theſe ſubtleties and conceits, which have been dignified with the name of ſcience: and it may ſafely be affirmed that on no ſubject did he ever beſtow ſo much labour, and derive ſo little uſeful knowledge. In a paper upon this ſubject, communicated to the Society in Calcutta,

* It is contained in the 3d vol. of Ayeen Acbery.

Calcutta, he thus concludes: "It reſults from this analyſis, (of Hindoo literature,) that the Veda, Upaveda, Vedanga, Purana, Derma, and Derſana, are the ſix great ſaſtras, in which all knowledge, divine and human is ſuppoſed to be comprehended. Whenever we direct our attention to Hindoo literature, the notion of infinity preſents itſelf; and the longeſt life would not be ſufficient for the peruſal of near 500,000 ſtanzas in the puianos, with a million more, perhaps, in the other works before mentioned."

OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF JUSTICE.

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THE police of India, as conducted by the later emperors of Hindoſtan, forms an important ſubject of enquiry. The principles of it were meant to be adhered to by the Europeans who ſucceeded to their power, while its abuſes, which had crept in during the decline of the empire, were to be corrected.

UNFORTUNATELY the whole knowledge obtained in theſe branches of adminiſtration, by Europeans, was at firſt gained from their deputies, clerks, and other ſervants; who, though well acquainted with all the arts of peculation, and the perquiſites to be gained in each department, could give no proper account of the duties each officer was bound to diſcharge.

THE

THE Nizam was the principal officer in each province, or viceroyalty: if ſeveral of theſe were united under the government of one perſon, he was then denominated a Subadar, and enjoyed the higheſt rank among the Imperial Officers, next to the Vizier. He had the ſupreme direction of all the officers of his province: his truſt was almoſt unlimited, and his power ſo great, that during many of the latter reigns, the viceroys ſcarcely acknowledged, or ſeldom felt their dependence; and at laſt their ſubjection to the Imperial Court was merely nominal.

NEXT to the Nizam, the Foujdars were the higheſt military officers: they were allotted to each Subadary, or vice-royalty, in number proportioned to its extent, and to that of the refractory zemindars which it contained. The Foujdar had under his command from one to two thouſand horſe, and his military rank was in general greater than his actual command. Military rank is eſtimated by the number of horſe, and is often nominal; the rank of a thouſand being given without any actual command. Their quarters were in ſome town or fort, in the diſtrict; and they marched with a kettle drum, and ſtandards diſplayed, the inſignia of their office and rank, which was conſidered as noble. Bengal, excluſive of Dacca, contained ten Foujdaries; and Behar was divided into eight.

THE duty of this officer was to reduce to ſubjection all refractory landholders; to ſuppreſs all riots

riots and inſurrections; to diſperſe and apprehend troops of banditti and thieves, with which the country has at all times been infeſted. They were alſo to afford protection to the Altimghas, or charity lands beſtowed on the neceſſitous. They and their deputies were to aid and aſſiſt the Nizam on any emergency, which might require the combined military force of the province *.

THE Darago of the Adawlet, that is, preſident of the civil court, was the ſupreme civil magiſtrate of the province. The Emperors retained in their own hands the deciſion of all cauſes of importance in the laſt reſort; and for this purpoſe they ſet apart two days of every week. The ordinary diſtribution of juſtice was left to the Adawlet, over which the Daroga preſided, with a ſalary annexed to his office, and a jaghir, to remove, by the poſſeſſion of independence, every temptation to corruption.

FROM day break, till three in the afternoon, this judge continued upon his tribunal, where he received the complaints of all ranks; and gave a ſpeedy deciſion on every ſubject in litigation. In matters of ſmaller moment, his deciſion was final; in caſes of difficulty, a reference was made to the Emperor and his council.

THIS

* Golam Hoſſein Khan. Seir Mutakhareen, vol. 3. p. 172.

THIS office, like every other, on the decline of the empire, became venal; and inſtead of being often refuſed as a ſituation of great reſponſibility, it was undertaken by whoever could purchaſe it; and was converted into an inſtrument of oppreſſion, and the means of ſecuring a fortune to the judge and his deputies. Under the Engliſh, the practice of the judges was ſtill more flagitious than ever; from their ignorance of the cuſtoms of the country, and their inability to detect the malverſation of thoſe who acted under them. IN 1782, it was veſted in the Engliſh gentlemen themſelves, which proved a great relief; in as far, however, as the minute details are executed by the natives, ſo far probably does their avarice taint the fountain of juſtice. This is boldly aſſerted by the Golam Hoſſein Khan, a nobleman of great worth and reſpectability, who has, like another Clarendon, written a hiſtory of his own times with as much truth and impartiality as poſſibly could be expected from a perſon in ſuch circumſtances. The Mahommedan noblemen were the great agents of the Imperial government; they filled every office of honour or emolument: theſe being now executed by the Engliſh perſonally, the ancient families of diſtinction have ſuffered by our conqueſt almoſt a total overthrow of rank and conſequence, as well as wealth.

THE exaggerated lamentations of this author, and his impreſſive deſcription of the grievous ſtate of oppreſſion, which the natives ſuffer under our government,

ment, and the partial panegyric beſtowed on the Mahommedan ſyſtem of government, is no more than what was to be expected from his feelings and his prejudices. Where theſe do not interfere, he gives a decided approbation to the juſtice and liberality diſplayed by our countrymen upon every occaſion.

THE Cazi was the next judge in the Mahommedan adminiſtration; he declared the laws in ſuch criminal and civil caſes as were connected with religion, and may be regarded as the ſupreme eccleſiaſtical judge. He had an ample penſion and jaghir; as any corruption in his function would have been deemed peculiarly diſgraceful to law and religion.

SOME crimes, ſuch as fornication and proſtitution, came particularly under the cognizance of the Cazi; he inflicted ſevere puniſhment upon ſuch as kept ſlave girls in their houſes, or proſtitutes, or even concubines, except conſecrated by the preſcribed forms of law. The muſicians were under his immediate inſpection, all differences among them were decided by him; and to prevent extravagance at feaſts, no man was allowed to hire a greater number of them than was ſuitable to his rank.

"THIS inſtitution, ſays Golam Hoſſein, has long been perverted into an inſtrument of taxation; the office has been regarded as a patent entitling to cer-

tain fees, and has been leaſed, and underleaſed to any ſordid perſon that would become a purchaſer, whether he were acquainted with muſſulmaniſm or not. Fees have been invented by the low ſubſtitutes of this office, at burials, at circumciſion, and at marriage. The poor have been deluded into a belief, that till the Cazi's depute has received his fee, the ſpirit of the deceaſed does not quit the houſe; till it is produced, the poor relations are deemed impure, and are ſhunned by all their acquaintances. To diſcharge this debt, the perſon will ſell his land, his effects, or even rob upon the high-way. The ſame pernicious conſequence followed their incapacity to diſcharge the fees for marriage and circumciſion *.

The Suder ul Sooder, or Great Almoner, was an officer of very high authority, whoſe buſineſs was to guard the diſtribution of the charity lands: to prevent their reſumption, or their alienation into other hands than thoſe of the poor: he was alſo intruſted with the ſuperintendence of the Cazi's office; to prevent ſuch as were ignorant of Mahommedaniſm from entering into that ſacred function. His buſineſs was alſo to prevent encroachments upon the lands belonging to the Exchequer. This office, from the great diſcretionary power annexed to it, proved, in the hands of an unprincipled man, the ſource of a thouſand

* Vide Seir Mutakhareen.

thouſand peculations: inſtead of protecting the poor, it became the gulph which ſwallowed up the ſubſiſtence of the needy; and under the pretence of almoner's fees, entailed a load of miſery upon the unhappy poor. The abuſe of this, and the preceding office, had become ſo enormous as to attract the notice of Mr Haſtings, who had the merit of aboliſhing fees within the Engliſh territories, or at leaſt confining them to the moderate rates cuſtomary in the moſt virtuous reigns.

The clerk of the market, (Mhutaſib,) was an officer of great importance, whoſe duties are now abandoned, and a perſon appointed to fill it, who uplifts the cuſtomary fees as a kind of perquiſite. The Mhutaſib inſpected the weights and meaſures; fixed the price of commodities, and ſettled diſputes: he preſerved the peace of the markets by puniſhing riots and drunkards.

The author of Seir Mutakhareen complains, that although double the fees and perquiſites are now uplifted by the mhutaſib, than were formerly, yet the ſtreets and lanes are crowded with diſorderly people; every corner is infeſted with drinking ſhops and tippling houſes, while the rogueries committed by falſe ſcales exceed all eſtimation. A great variety of inferior officers, in the Nizam's and Foujdar's department, are in the appointment of the Emperor, and of conſequence independent of theſe miniſters. The moſt remarkable of theſe were the Vaaca Naviſe,

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or gazetteer; the Sevanah Naviſe, or hiſtoriographer, and the Harcarah, a head ſpy. It was their duty to commit to writing the principal events and occurrences of each day, and to diſpatch them on the ſubſequent morning to the Emperor; who, by this ſingular inſtitution, was acquainted with every thing of note that happened in any part of the empire. Theſe diſpatches, which were carried to Court by regular poſts, were preſented by a Daroga to the Prince each day.

By theſe provincial intelligences, which often deſcended to very minute particulars, the Emperor had it in his power to redreſs grievances before the party had time to ſtate them. Some imperial manuſcripts of Aurengzebe are ſtill preſerved of his own diction and hand-writing. Though theſe officers, from the nature of their duty, were made independent of the grandees who ruled in each province, even a ſuſpicion of their intimacy was ſufficient to diſmiſs them; being deemed incompatible with the integrity of their intelligence.

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Lucknow, 1798.

THE manners of Muſſulmans, from their numbers, and from their influence on ſociety, ſince the conqueſt, form an important part of the hiſtory of Hindoſtan. By them almoſt every department of government has been conducted; the partiality of the conquerors for their countrymen, having committed to their management almoſt every branch of the adminiſtration. Their taſte for ſhow and ſplendour, as magiſtrates and governors of provinces, contributed indirectly to the proſperity of the vanquiſhed, and in ſome meaſure alleviated the ſufferings of a dependent and oppreſſed people.

IN the provinces of Bengal, and Behar, the immenſe eſtabliſhment of 150,000 or 170,000 cavalry, offered employment to many of the poorer claſſes, who

who ſubſiſted by furniſhing them with food, clothing, and furniture; while the civil eſtabliſhment annexed to judges, collectors of revenue and other officers, provided for perhaps an equal number of people, and diſtributed among them with rapidity the far greater part of the contributions levied in each province.

The nephews of Aliverdi Khan, though only the deputies of a viceroy, and appointed at a period when the country was harraſſed by a foreign enemy, lived with a ſplendour more reſembling ſovereign princes, than perſons inveſted with temporary and delegated power. Seyd Mahmed, the youngeſt and leaſt aſpiring, had, in the diſtrict of Purneah, an eſtabliſhment of 15,000 cavalry and infantry, beſides a vaſt number of elephants, camels, horſes and carriages, with a large park of artillery. His court, receiving ſalaries, was numerous and ſplendid, without reckoning a train of dependents who received monthly penſions, from one to five thouſand rupees. The ſeraglio conſiſted of five hundred women, beſides eunuchs and other ſervants. The jewels, table, and equipage, were all in a ſtile of magnificence that ſeems to vie with the ſplendour of the Jewiſh kings, in the proſperous reigns of David and Solomon, thoſe illuſtrious Sovereigns of a great and independent nation: yet this Seyd Mahmed was only the deputy of a Soubadar over one diſtrict, who himſelf was a ſervant, paying tribute, and acknowledging ſubjection to the Imperial Court. His eſtabliſhment

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is particulariſed, not on account of its ſuperior expence or magnificence, but becauſe it has been faithfully deſcribed by a hiſtorian of rank and integrity, who enjoyed a conſiderable office under his adminiſtration *.

THE two other nephews of Aliverdi had much more conſiderable appointments than the Governor of Purneah; they lived in ſtill greater ſplendour, and yet their courts were only images of the grandeur and wealth diſplayed at that of Moorſhed abad. This provincial capital contained, within the memory of perſons ſtill living, ſome of the richeſt ſubjects in the world. During the Mahratta incurſions, the houſe of Jugget Seet was plundered of two millions and a half ſterling, in ſilver; an accident which ſo little affected his credit, that he continued to grant bills of exchange at ſight, and to a large amount, to government. When the enormities of Surajah ul Dowlah had rendered his government odious, Meer Jaffier, aided by this banker's wealth, which ſecured him the patronage of the Europeans, aſcended the throne. The domeſtics of this Jagget Seet, we are told, amounted to two thouſand perſons.

DURING

* Golam Hoſſein Khan, vol. 1ſt. p. 666. This prince, ſays he, governed Purneah with ſo much equity and attention to the ſubjects, that the nobles and peaſants ſpoke of his adminiſtration with great applauſe.

DURING their religious feſtivals, the Muſſulmans diſplay their love of ſhow in a remarkable manner: the whole river, upon certain occaſions, for ſeveral miles, diſplays one blaze of light; their moſques are alſo illuminated, and their proceſſions dazzle the eye with a profuſion of gilt and ſilvered work, and ornaments of artificial flowers. The moſt pompous ceremonies in Europe make a very feeble impreſſion upon thoſe who have been ſpectators of Mahommedan ſolemnities.

IN the court of Aliverdi, this paſſion for magnificence was tempered by a religious gravity, and auſterity of manners, by which that prince was diſtinguiſhed. A bigot to Shyiſm, and ſoured by the narrow principles of that ſect, he ſhewed a marked averſion to wine, and illegitimate connections with the ſex. He uſed to awake two hours before daybreak, ſays his hiſtorian, and having performed the uſual ablutions, and prayers of divine precept, he repeated other devotions by way of ſupererogation. "His breakfaſt, which conſiſted of coffee, was finiſhed before ſeven, when he gave audience in a public hall, and heard petitions, for two hours." He afterwards, with the great officers, or with his relations, converſed in a private apartment, ſometimes upon buſineſs, but oftener upon cookery, generally "ordering ſome new diſh, or giving ſome particular directions for dreſſing ſuch as were common."

By noon dinner was over, and he retired to ſleep, "when the ſtory tellers and bed watchmen attended and did their office *." In Aſia, where not one in a thouſand can read, and ſtill fewer have an inclination, a ſtory teller becomes a very uſeful profeſſion in the retinue of a great man: but with ignorance there is generally a great want of curioſity, and theſe ſtory tellers are employed not for inſtruction, but to lull their maſters aſleep. The bed-watchmen are employed in chaffing or rubbing the limbs, which, in a hot country, is found very refreſhing: both theſe offices are ſometimes performed by women.

A ſhort repoſe during the hotteſt part of the day, is perhaps neceſſary in this climate; the greater part of the Europeans, and all the natives, indulge themſelves in a habit ſo grateful to a relaxed frame. The pious Aliverdi never exceeded one hour in this gratification, after which he performed his cuſtomary noon prayers, and read a chapter of the Coran; having refreſhed himſelf with a cooling draught of ice water †.

About one or two in the afternoon, audience was given to thoſe learned and pious ſages, of whom a

* Vide Seir Mutakhareen, vol. 3. p. 680.

† Ice is preſerved for creams, and for cooling water in this country, by a proceſs now almoſt univerſally known in Europe. During the rains, ſaltpetre ſupplies the place of ice.

few have been introduced to your notice on a former occaſion. By ſome of them the Coran was read and explained for two hours, when the holy men retired, after obſerving the ſame routine of reſpectful formalities by which they were introduced: by this you are not to underſtand, that, like ſervile courtiers, they paid their obeiſance; they were met at the entrance with profound reſpect by the viceroy, and one of them placed on a muſnud directly oppoſite to his own.

So incredible is the power of cuſtom, that even the decorous habits of Aliverdi Khan, could not conquer a practice of introducing at court a ſet of buffoons and jeſters, common in India *. After a ſhort converſation on the news of the day, which was ſupported by the opulent merchants and others, theſe men were introduced, who bandied about amongſt each other the coarſeſt ribbaldry, and moſt indelicate ſarcaſms, to the great entertainment of the dignified perſons who were their hearers. Theſe jeſters were called (Hedjra) hermaphrodites, and had merited the appellation by means the moſt unnatural, and for purpoſes not to be deſcribed.

THE

* Theſe are ordered to be kept by the magiſtrate, in the ſacred volumes: "He ſhall retain in his ſervice a great number of buffoons, or paraſites, jeſters and dancers, and athletics; and he ſhall render all his ſervants contented and grateful."—Vide Gentoo Laws, p. 118.

THE hour of ſupper was about twilight, a ſlight repaſt, which this prince partook with the princeſſes, his relations, his daughters, and grand-daughters. Thoſe dancing women, who conſtituted the greateſt part of their entertainment, and in whoſe company all his contemporaries ſpent a large portion of their time, were admitted at none of the avocations of Aliverdi Khan *.

YOU muſt not, however, conclude, that the correct and auſtere manners of the viceroy guided the conduct of his diſſolute courtiers; or that ſtrict virtue was maintained by thoſe dignified ladies who made a part of his ſociety. This whole family were, on the contrary, the foremoſt in every ſcene of diſſipation. All his three daughters were notorious for their intrigues and gallantry in a part of the world where women of rank live in the greateſt privacy, or are ſecluded from all mixed company. If they travel, it is in a covered carriage, leſt they ſhould be prophaned by the eyes of a ſtranger. Such carriages are deemed ſacred in every part of India, nor are they interrupted by an enemy even in time of war.

THIS cuſtom, eſtabliſhed by the law of nations, for the protection of the ſex, the profligate daughters of

* Some part of the Seraglio, and even companies of dancing women, generally accompanied the Mahommedan princes when travelling, and frequently attended them in a campaign.

of Aliverdi availed themſelves of, to carry on their intrigues. In theſe vehicles, ſecure from interruption, they were conveyed to the houſes of their gallants, or had them conveyed, in the guiſe of women, into the Haram.

SURAJA Dowlah, the ſucceſſor and grandſon of Aliverdi, practiſed at the earlieſt age, and often in the public view, all thoſe debaucheries which are known in Aſia. By ſuch conduct, joined to an inſolent behaviour to his officers, he effectually alienated them from his ſervice; and, when his imprudence plunged him into a war with the Engliſh, a numerous party of them ſought an opportunity of betraying him. This they found at the memorable battle of Plaſſey, where the young viceroy's power received a ſhock, from which it never recovered.

AN

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORIAN GHOLAM HOSSEIN KHAN.

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Calcutta, Jan. 1798.

In giving an idea of the literature of India, I cannot omit mentioning Golam Hoſſein Khan, the late author of a work, entitled Seir Mutakhareen, or View of Modern Times. This work is regarded as claſſical Perſian, in point of ſtile; and contains a civil hiſtory of Hindoſtan, from the death of Aurengzebe to the year 1781. The biographical anecdotes found in this work, concerning many of our countrymen, who are ſtill living, renders it peculiarly intereſting: the details of the Engliſh conqueſts in India, and his ſtrictures upon the Britiſh government in that country, convey the ideas of a native, of high character, upon ſubjects of the firſt importance. This work, though tranſlated into ſomething like Engliſh, by a renegado Frenchman, is but little known even to Orientaliſts, except by name.

This

This Mogul nobleman was a partizan of the preſent Emperor during his fallen fortunes; but like the great Clarendon, he delivers his ſentiments with ſpirit and impartiality; and with a force, clearneſs, and ſimplicity of ſtile rarely to be found in Aſiatic authors, and which juſtly entitle him to prehemineence among the hiſtorians of his country. The hiſtory of his life, given by himſelf, is prefixed to his volumes; ſome particulars of it I ſhall inſert, for it muſt be intereſting to know the hiſtory of an independent native, who has diſplayed ſo much penetration, ſagacity, and knowledge, reſpecting the conduct of the Engliſh in the government of his country.

Golam Hoſſein Khan was born in Shah-Jehanabad in 1140 of the Hegira; and being related by his mother to Aliverdi Khan, the future Nabob of Bengal, he repaired to that province with all his connections. "Soon after our arrival in Moorſhedabad, ſays he, fortune began to favour our family. Aliverdi Khan was appointed governor of Patna, where my father accompanied him, and where our family have lived to this day in affluence, dignity, and ſplendour: for the houſes we bought, and the lands we acquired by purchaſe, gift, or otherwiſe, during the adminiſtration of Aliverdi, are to this day in our poſſeſſion. In the year 1188, I was induced, unfortunately, to become ſecurity, to a conſiderable amount, for a zemindar, who already owed me the higheſt obligations, and from whom I little expected ſuch

ſuch a return, and ſo much perfidy as I met with. In conſequence of his miſconduct, I was called upon by the Engliſh government to pay 60,000 rupees on his account, which was the ſum for which I had become bound. This demand coming on me unexpectedly, I was obliged to ſell my jewels and plate, to the amount of 31,000 rupees, and to make up the balance by borrowing it from the banker. In this way I ſaved myſelf from the ſeverity with which I would have been treated by the government to whom the money was due, and from the ſtill more unfeeling rigor of the aumils, muttſudies, and other revenue officers, who ſeemed to wait with a malicious eye for the ſignal from government, to ſeize my whole property. I was obliged to put into the banker's hands, as a ſecurity for the money I had borrowed, the portion of land I poſſeſſed, and to endeavour to procure ſubſiſtence by ſome other means. But I was unable to get any employment, notwithſtanding all the intereſt, and all the enquiries which my friends made in my behalf. At laſt it pleaſed fortune to give me a friend in General Goddart, a man of merit ſo conſpicuous as to need no praiſe, and whoſe kindneſs and generoſity to me, as well as to many of my countrymen, entitle him to my laſting gratitude. Such a character is not often met with among the Engliſh in Hindoſtan.

"He was about this time appointed reſident at Chunarghur; ſoon after which he came to Azimabad, (Patna,) where he made ſome ſtay. Being an

an old acquaintance, I went to ſee him. He had the kindneſs to enquire about my affairs, and he heard, with cordial concern, the calamity which had befallen them. "I am truly ſorry, ſaid he, to hear what has happened; but as I ſee no likelihood of your getting employment here, you had better come along with me, and we ſhall live upon what we can get." I cheerfully accepted of the propoſal, looking upon it as one of the ſecret reſources which Providence had kept in ſtore for me. I accordingly got myſelf ready, and accompanied him to Chunar. But on General Goddart's arrival there, he found that the ſituation to which he was appointed, was, in point of emolument, much below what he had reaſon to expect, and indeed ſcarcely ſufficient to defray his neceſſary expences. This circumſtance diſabled him from aſſiſting me as he wiſhed; but he committed to my care whatever concerned the revenue matters of that town. He allotted alſo for my accommodation an excellent houſe, which had been fitted up for himſelf; and ſent his own boats to bring my wife and family. When they arrived, he gave them a penſion of 300 rupees a month. After behaving to me in this very handſome manner, it was natural in him to receive my viſits with that particular diſtinction which he ſhewed me.

"I have already obſerved, that General Goddart's income at Chunar, was much below his expenditure: in conſequence of this, he now determined to relinquiſh his ſituation, and get permiſſion to enter into

into the ſervice of Azof ud Dowlah, having heard that that prince, diſſatisfied with his old troops, had diſmiſſed them, and intended to raiſe a new army, the diſcipline of which he wiſhed to commit to the charge of an Engliſh officer of rank. My friend conceived that ſuch an employment would be more ſuitable to his turn of mind, than the ſtation he held at Chunar; and that it would likewiſe prove more profitable both to himſelf and me. But as he had no acquaintance with Mr Briſtow, who was then miniſter at Lucknow, he did not think it proper to make any perſonal application to him on the ſubject. On his aſking my opinion of the matter, I propoſed that he ſhould give me a letter to another Engliſhman, a friend of Mr Briſtow's, to whom, by that means, I ſhould find a ready introduction; and thereby be able to ſound him in regard to the object in view, without mentioning his name. Of this he approved; and giving to me the letter to the gentleman at Lucknow, he wiſhed me a ſucceſsful journey."

AFTER, however, obtaining the conſent of Mr Briſtow to this meaſure, all the views of the General and Golam were defeated, by the appointment of Mr Middleton as reſident in the room of Mr Briſtow. Though this was an intimate acquaintance of the General, from whoſe friendſhip he expected much, he totally diſapproved of the meaſure. On the failure of this ſcheme, and the appointment of General Goddart to join the army in the Deccan, all connection between him and our author was broken off.

At a more early period of his life, he had been employed in the courts of Aliverdi Khan, and that of his nephews, in conſequential ſituations; and after having received various diſappointments and reverſes of fortune, he ſettled at laſt at Patna, where, on a ſum of money left by his friends, he was enabled to ſupport his family comfortably. It was there alſo, that during a period of quiet and retirement, he tells us he compoſed the Seir Mutakhareen. In the ſame city, in the earlier part of his life, he witneſſed the maſſacre of the Engliſh, a cruelty which he reprobated, but which he could not prevent. He conferred, however, ſome obligations on Mr Fullarton, the only perſon who eſcaped from that bloody cataſtrophe.

The military and civil tranſactions of his time, which occupy the moſt conſiderable part of theſe volumes, have not precluded the author inſerting large biographical anecdotes, which impart greater variety and intereſt to his work. He has ſpoken frequently of the character of authors, and diſcuſſed the merits of their writings; in this, however, his candour and benevolence of mind, appear to far greater advantage than his literary attainments. From the praiſes which he beſtows on the contemptible reveries of fanatics, we can draw no favourable opinion of Mogul literature at this period; nor does it appear, that in any æra of the Empire, they ever roſe above the humbleſt mediocrity.

When

WHEN travelling in purſuit of buſineſs, he frequently ſtepped aſide to viſit what he terms the abodes of learned men; and as often as he ſpeaks of character, it is generally from perſonal obſervation and acquaintance. In his journey from Chunar to Lucknow, mentioned above, he went by way of Juanpore, and ſtopped there for ſome days; becauſe, to uſe his own words, "he underſtood it was become the reſidence of the illuſtrious and venerable Seid Mahmed Aſkheſſy," of whom he had heard ſo much. "I ſent to deſire leave to pay him a reſpectful viſit. Being admitted to his preſence, I ſpent two hours with him. His converſation delighted me, even beyond what I expected: it was replete with the many excellencies for which he was celebrated; and I took my leave of him fully ſatisfied, that fame in her encomiums had fallen ſhort of what I had ſeen and heard. To this day I remember his venerable aſpect, and enchanting converſation; and they have made ſuch an impreſſion on my mind, that I muſt ſuſpend the narrative of my own actions, to give the reader a glimpſe of the talents and virtues which adorned that diſtinguiſhed man.

"HE was of a family of Seids, that ranked for many ages amongſt the moſt reſpectable of that ſect, in the city of Juanpore."

THIS Seid of virtuous diſpoſition, and fine genius, wrote a book of practical morality, all the rules of which he extracted from his own practice; ſo that this

this book was a commentary on his life. Very different this from the generality of moraliſts, whoſe principles and practice are completely at variance; who preach up the utility of moral conduct, yet lead a life of ſin.

"His ſpeech was ſuch, that it ſeemed to flow from the fountain of wiſdom; and his advices and counſels were ſo many remedies againſt ſickneſs and ſorrow of heart.

"He poſſeſſed a very extenſive knowledge, graced with ſo much modeſty, that he inſtructed all who converſed with him, without making them feel their own inferiority. He lived upon a ſmall income, without a wiſh to increaſe it.

"It is true, he was not regularly initiated in the ſciences; but the richneſs of his mind, and the ſtrength of his judgement, amply ſupplied that want. By the force of his own genius, he had become a repoſitory of all the arts and ſciences, practical as well as abſtract. No wonder then, that his houſe was reſorted to by all the learned perſons of that city and neighbourhood, and by numbers who travelled thither from diſtant countries, being learned themſelves, or poſſeſſing a love of knowledge.

"The natural turn of his mind was to candour and modeſty; ſo that he was as forward to acknowledge the merit of others, as he was ſtudious to conceal

ceal his own. He gave his time to reading lectures, which is the nobleſt of all occupations; the nobleſt and moſt pleaſing thing of all being to bring to light the treaſures of hidden knowledge. Whenever any one in his preſence introduced a diſcourſe in diſpraiſe of a man's character, either directly or indirectly, he had too much politeneſs to ſtop and reprimand him; but he would with great addreſs, and peculiar felicity, turn the diſcourſe to another ſubject, without giving the ſpeaker the ſmalleſt offence. This venerable man died at the age of ſeventy."

In this ſtrain does this amiable writer criticiſe his contemporary authors; men far inferior to himſelf, either in judgement, knowledge of the world, or even literature. Perhaps, it may be owing to this candour, and mildneſs of diſpoſition, that he has treated ſome parts of the miſconduct of the Engliſh, as magiſtrates, with ſo lenient a hand. He deems their conduct meritorious upon the whole, and their government advantageous; though the Mahommedans of rank, whom it has diſplaced from all the more lucrative official ſituations, are perhaps the only claſs of men whoſe circumſtances it has injured.

One diſadvantage ariſing from our ſituation in India, he has ſeen, and laments, which ariſes from the temporary reſidence of individuals in the country; and the proportionably ſmall intereſt they can feel in its welfare. Men, he obſerves, who leave their native country with the ſole view of acquiring an

an independency, and then to return to it, can have little inducement to confer upon their temporary reſidence any permanent improvements. The meritorious buſineſs of planting topes, digging wells, making roads, and various employments ſuitable for the wealthy part of a community, individuals will ſeldom undertake in a country which they hope ſoon to leave. As the Europeans, according to our ſyſtem, have not been allowed to colonize in India, there can be no doubt of the juſtice of Golam Hoſſein's remarks on this particular.

Of injuſtice and corruption, as judges, he entirely acquits our countrymen; and of cruelty and oppreſſion, as rulers, he brings not the ſlighteſt imputation: from his intimate acquaintance with this ſubject, and his bias, if he felt any, being wholly againſt us, we may applaud our countrymen for having obtained this honourable teſtimony of their character. From want of knowledge in the language, which frequently has happened to the junior ſervants, he does accuſe them of ſometimes ſuffering themſelves to be impoſed on by their bannians and ſircars; nor does he conceal that injuſtice is ſometimes committed through their interference. Perſian writings, and books, are not committed to the preſs and diſſeminated by publication as in Europe. This author's manuſcripts, for many years, were handed about privately among the natives: he could therefore have no fear of giving offence to the Engliſh by what he brought forward. This is indeed apparent from

from many ſtrictures he has written abundantly ſevere; nor does there ſeem any intention to pleaſe by flattery in a work that was never ſubmitted to the peruſal of the Engliſh: the praiſes of General Goddart, and of many other individuals to be found in theſe volumes, are no exception to this remark, ſince they are evidently the effuſions of ſincerity and gratitude; and ſome of them, as that of Mr Fullarton, were written long after the parties concerned had left the country. Without having any knowledge of civil liberty in the abſtract, this author poſſeſſed the fulleſt enjoyment of it; and from this circumſtance his teſtimony has become of ſo great importance.

OF

OF THE AYEEN ACBERY;

A Statistical Account of Hindostan during the Reign of Acber.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

Caunpore, Jan. 1799.

THIS voluminous work is the production of the celebrated Vizier of Acber, Abulfazel, a miniſter equally renowned for his talents and integrity: he ſerved his maſter with fidelity till the forty-ſeventh year of his reign; at which period he was murdered by ſome banditti on his return from the Deccan. There are few countries, even the moſt civilized, who are in poſſeſſion of ſo great a ſhare of authentic information regarding their own internal policy, as this book contains. Of its eſtimation among the natives we have ample proof in the writings of Mahomed Shereeff Motamed Khan, who publiſhed about fifteen years after the death of Acber, the following character of Abulfazel's hiſtory.

" To

"To the learned it is well known that Alamy Sheikh Abulfazel, by the command of the Emperor Jillaleddeen Mahommed Acber, wrote the hiſtory of that Monarch, from the commencement of his reign, till the time of his own death, and which he entitled *Acbernameh*. It is compoſed of three volumes: the firſt conſiſts of a ſummary account of the Emperor's anceſtors; the ſecond volume contains the occurrences of Acber's reign, from his acceſſion to the throne, down to the 47th year, that in which the author died; the third contains the Emperor's inſtitutes, which is entitled the Ayeen Acbery." This laſt volume has lately been tranſlated from the original Perſian by Mr Gladwin, and is divided into three parts, containing the Emperor's regulations for every department of government; a hiſtorical and geographical deſcription of the twelve viceroyalties of Hindoſtan; and the work cloſes with a full account of the religion of the Hindoos, their writings, and the ſects into which they are divided.

As a ſpecimen of the manner in which the hiſtorical part of this volume is executed by the author, his account of the Soubah of Agra is ſelected: it contained the capital of the empire, and the place of the author's nativity.

"It is ſituated in the ſecond climate: in length from Gatimpoor, which bounds it on the ſide of Allahabad, to Pulwul, which bounds it on the ſide of Delhi: it meaſures 175 coſs (350 miles), and its

breadth is from Kinouge to Chundery, in Malwah. It is bounded on the eaſt by Gatimpoor; on the weſt by Pulwul; on the north by the river Ganges; and on the ſouth by Chundery.

"In this Soubah are many rivers; the chief of which are the Jown, (Jumna,) and the Chumbul. A great many ſituations in the ſouthern mountains, parts of this Soubah, are remarkably pleaſant and healthy. Agriculture is here in perfection; there is abundance of flowers, and ſweet-ſcented oils; and very excellent betle leaf. They have melons and grapes, as fine as are produced in Iran and Turan.

"Agra is a large city, the air of which is eſteemed very healthy. The river Jown runs through it for five coſs; and on both ſides are delightful houſes, inhabited by people of all nations, and where are diſplayed the productions of every climate. His Majeſty has erected a fort of red ſtone; the like of which no traveller has ever beheld *. It contains alone five hundred ſtone buildings of ſurpriſing conſtruction, in the Bengal, Gujerat, and other ſtiles; and the artificers have decorated them with beautiful paintings. At the eaſtern gate, are carved in ſtone, two elephants, with their riders, of excellent workmanſhip.

"In

* Still in repair, and at preſent garriſoned by Dowlet Row Scindia's troops, under M. Perron.

"In former times, Agra was a village dependent on Byaneh, where Sultan Jecunder Lowdy kept his court. Here his Majeſty has founded a moſt magnificent city. On the oppoſite ſide of the river is the Charbagh, (four gardens,) a monument of the magnificence of the inhabitant of paradiſe *. The author of this book was born on that ſide of the river; and there are the tombs of his anceſtors, together with that of his elder brother Sheikh Fizu, and many other eminent perſons are alſo interred there.

"Near the city of Agra, upon the banks of the river Jown, in a village called Rungleh, is a famous place of Hindoo worſhip.

"Futteh-poor was formerly dependent on Byaneh, and then called Suckery. Upon Agra being made the ſeat of government, it alſo became a city: it is ſituated at the diſtance of twelve coſs from the city of Agra. It has a ſtone fort, containing magnificent buildings, and over one of the gates are two aſtoniſhing elephants carved in ſtone. The royal palace, and the houſes of the nobility, are built upon the mountain, but the plains are alſo decorated with many buildings and gardens. His Majeſty has cauſed to be erected on the top of the mountain, a moſque, a college, and a monaſtery, for Soffees, which are the admiration of travellers. Adjoining

* Humayun, the king's father.

ing to the city is a lake, extending twelve coſs, and upon the edge of it his Majeſty has built an amphitheatre with high minarets. The amphitheatre is uſed for the game of Chowgong; and here are alſo exhibited the elephant fights. In this neighbourhood is a quarry of red ſtone, out of which they cut ſlabs and pillars of any dimenſions.

"In Agra they manufacture blankets, and fine ſtuffs; and here are aſſembled artificers of every denomination.

"Byaneh in former times was a capital city. It has a large fort containing many ſubterraneous caverns, where there are now found warlike inſtruments, and kitchen utenſils; and here is a very high tower. The mangos of this place are excellent; and ſome of them weigh above two pounds. This town is famous for very white ſugar: here is a well, with the water of which they knead the ſugar into a paſte like flour, and form it into cakes, which they call Gundoreh, and it is carried to great diſtances as a rarity; for it cannot be made with any other water. The indigo of this place is very fine, ſelling from ten to ſixteen rupees per maund. Excellent henna, of a high colour, is alſo to be procured here. This town is the burial place of many illuſtrious men. Toodeh Bheem is a place at the diſtance of three coſe, where is a cave full of water, whoſe depth is unfathomable. Mines of copper, and torquoiſes have been found here; but they will not defray the

expence

expence of being worked. Mehterah is a city upon the banks of the river Jown, where are many idolatrous temples, to which the Hindoos reſort.

" CALPEE is alſo a city on the banks of the Jown, and where are the tombs of many great perſonages. Very good ſugar is to be procured here. At the time that the Sherkian dynaſty firſt eſtabliſhed themſelves, the princes of Calpee were tributary to Delhi. When Kudder Khan, who governed here, rebelled, Sultan Howſhing came from Malwah, received his ſubmiſſion, and then reinſtated him in his government. Sultan Mahmood, of the Sherkian dynaſty, took it from Nuſſer Khan, the ſon of Kudder Khan.

" KINOUGE was in ancient times the capital city of Hindoſtan *.

" GUALIOR is a famous fort, in which there are many ſtately buildings; and there is a ſtone elephant over the gate. The air and water of this place are both eſteemed good. It has always been celebrated for fine fingers and beautiful women.

" ALLORE has conſiderable manufactures of woollen carpets, and glaſs. At Beeral are ſeveral copper

* The ruins are ſtill extant; they extend over a ſpace of fifteen miles.

copper mines ſo profitable, that out of a maunde of ore, they extract thirty-five ſeers of metal. Here has alſo been diſcovered a ſilver mine, but it is not worth working.

"NEAR the mountains of Narnole, is a well which the Hindoos worſhip: and when the Titte Amavus * happens upon a Friday, the water flows over at ſun riſe.

"THERE are alſo copper mines at Singonoh Dadypoor, and at Kotepotely: and at the town of Kanwery are many cold and hot ſprings.

"THIS Soubah contains thirteen ſircars, ſubdivided into two hundred and three pergunnahs. The meaſured lands are two crore ſeventy-eight lacks of biggahs, and eighteen biſwahs. The amount of revenue is ſixty-four crore, ſixty-two lacks, fifty thouſand, three hundred and four dams; or in Sicca rupees, 16,156,257; of which there are of Seyurgal, one crore, twenty-one lacks, five thouſand, ſeven hundred and three dams; Sicca rupees 255,392. This Subah furniſhes 50,600 cavalry; 577,570 infantry, and 221 elephants."

IT

* The laſt diviſion of the month correſponding to the thirteenth day; this ſpace correſponds with twelve degrees of the moon's progreſs.

It may be obſerved of this account, that ſome articles exceed, while others fall ſhort of the contributions levied on the reſt of the empire. Six hundred thouſand troops, allowing an equal number for the other eleven Soubahs, would bring the imperial army to ſeven millions two hundred thouſand men; while we find by the ſame author that its actual amount did not reach five millions.

If the military contribution levied on the Soubah of Agra, exceeds that of the other portions of the empire, the money aſſeſſment falls much below it, though we ſhould have expected a different reſult, ſince wealth naturally flows to the ſeat of government. The ſum afforded by this province is only two millions of our money, which gives for the twelve Soubahs, an aſſeſſment of twenty-four millions. We find, however, that the uſual revenue, during the reign of Acber, amounted to thirty-ſix millions ſterling; a ſum moderate, when compared to the extent and population of the Mogul empire.

The revenue here given in the groſs, is detailed in an after part of the work, entitled Tuckſeem Jumma, (aſſeſſment of land,) where the total ſum is diſtributed among each ſeparate mahl, and diſtrict of the country.

As nearly a third part of the Mogul Empire is at preſent under the protection of the Britiſh government, it cannot fail to ſtrike the Engliſh reader that

a vaſt ſaving of hands is afforded to agriculture and manufactures by the introduction of European diſcipline among the native troops, and the conſequent reduction of their number. On the ſame ſcale with the Mogul eſtabliſhment, our army in India ſhould amount to two millions; but a more correct diſcipline has enabled us to execute the ſame ſervice, and in a much more effectual manner, by a twentieth part of the number of men. This, however, is by no means the only immediate advantage reſulting from European conqueſts in India. War is a much more rare occurrence now than formerly: when it does happen, it is carried on to a concluſion in leſs time, and with more humanity; while the grand purpoſe of an army, the protection of life and property, is ſecured in a degree ſuperior beyond all compariſon. When the Engliſh army firſt entered the province of Behar, againſt the preſent Emperor, we have the teſtimony of a native author of high conſideration, "that they hardly injured a blade of graſs *;" and if, in ſubſequent times, they have been guilty of irregularities, theſe will bear no compariſon with the evils invariably attendant on the preſence of a native army.

OF

* Golam Hoſſein Khan, in his Seir Mutakhareen.

OF TRADES AND PROFESSIONS AS PRACTISED AMONG THE NATIVES OF INDIA.

. . . . . .

Caunpore, Jan. 1798.

THREE cauſes have been aſſigned for the ſmall progreſs made by the Oriental nations in the arts; the tyranny of their deſpotic governments; the enervating heat of the climate; and their attachment to ancient uſages. By a reflecting mind, however, theſe will be found eaſily reducible to the ſecond; for if the energies of body and mind are injured by the effects of climate, deſpotiſm, the moſt ſimple of all forms of government, will of conſequence ariſe; and cuſtom will become naturally a guide when the powers of intellect are weak.

THE preſent ſtate of almoſt all the arts, compared with the ancient monuments of them which ſtill remain, demonſtrates that they have long continued ſtationary, and offers a ſtrong preſumption that they

never will be carried to a very high degree of perfection. Unfortunately the art of government has always been the leaſt perfect of any; as adminiſtered by the Indian princes, it has never afforded a ſteady encouragement to the ſciences, nor any adequate rewards to their profeſſors. Educated in the ſloth and ignorance of a ſeraglio, the ſovereigns of India could not appreciate in their ſubjects qualities of which they were deſtitute themſelves: they were accuſtomed to pay their artiſts by the day, like the meaneſt mechanic; and their ſcholars, if they had any, were ſuffered to live and die in the ſame miſerable obſcurity, as if they had handled the ſpade or the plough. If ever their pleaſures aſſumed a more manly complexion, ſtill it was only one trade that they encouraged: war was their profeſſion, and properly their plunder.

What is ſaid, by a good obſerver, of the ſtate of painting among the Hindoos, is applicable in a great meaſure to the other arts; they are conducted by no ſcientific principles; and the effect produced, is the reſult of patient exactneſs, or a happy *knack*, rather than of a well conceived deſign. "La peinture chez les Indiens eſt, et ſera toujours dans l'enfance: ils trouvent admirable un tableau chargé de rouge et de bleu, et dont les perſonnages ſont vêtus d'or. Ils n'entendent point le clair obſcur, n'arrondiſſent jamais les objets, et ne ſavent pas les mettre en perſpective;

ſpective; en un mot leurs meilleures peintures ne ſont que de mauvaiſes enluminures *."

PERHAPS their painted cloths are more indebted to the brilliancy of the colours, and the goodneſs of the water, than any ſkill of the artiſt, for that admiration with which they have been viewed. It muſt be acknowledged, that ſome of our European naturaliſts have found excellent draftſmen among the natives, who have executed drawings of many ſpecimens of natural hiſtory, with much neatneſs and accuracy. The laborious exactneſs with which they imitate every feather of a bird, or the ſmalleſt fibre on the leaf of a plant, renders them valuable aſſiſtants in this department; but farther than this they cannot advance one ſtep: if your bird is to be placed on a rock, or upon the branch of a tree, the draftſman is at a ſtand; the object is not before him; and his imagination can ſupply nothing. Sculpture among the Hindoos, labours under the ſame imperfection, with painting: the numberleſs ſtatues which we ſee in their temples, are poorly deſigned, and worſe executed; nor do theſe religious edifices impreſs the mind with a more favourable idea of the architecture, than the ſculpture of India. The columns and pillars which adorn their immenſe pagodas, are deſtitute of any fixed proportions, and the edifices themſelves are ſubjected to no rules of architecture. The

* Voyages de Sonnerat aux Indes, Tom. 1ſt, p. 99.

The celebrated mauſoleum at Agra, commonly called the Tage Mahl, which has ſo often been deſcribed by travellers, has little to boaſt of, either in ſimplicity or elegance of deſign. The immenſity of its ſize, its coſtly ornaments, and the minute exactneſs of its decorations, in particular parts, are worthy of notice; but they afford much ſtronger proofs of the wealth and magnificence of Shah Jehan, than the correctneſs of his taſte. In China, Egypt, and India, where a numerous population, plenty of proviſions, and deſpotic power, in the hands of a ſingle perſon, have enabled the monarchs to execute works, in extent, far more vaſt than thoſe in Europe, that circumſtance, however, cannot eſtabliſh their claim to equal proficiency in the arts, nor to the ſame ſkill in the principles of ſcience.

If we are to judge merely from the number of inſtruments, and the frequency with which they apply them, the Hindoos might be regarded as conſiderable proficients in muſic, yet has the teſtimony of all ſtrangers deemed it equally imperfect as the other arts. Their warlike inſtruments are rude, noiſy, and inartificial: and in the temples, thoſe employed for the purpoſes of religion, are managed apparently on the ſame principle; for, in their idea, the moſt pleaſant and harmonious, is that which makes the loudeſt noiſe. In this country, muſic, or rather noiſe, is a neceſſary adjunct of wealth and dignity: the beating of the Nagari (great drum) is the emblem of ſovereign power; and the various de-

legations

A Tauntee

legations of it are typified by ſome particular inſtruments. The different claſſes of jugglers, and particularly thoſe who charm ſerpents, make uſe of an inſtrument which they call *magondi;* by the ſound of which they not only make them dance, but charm them out of the houſes, put them into baſkets, and carry them about as an exhibition to amuſe the people. It is generally the ſame claſs of ſtrollers who perform feats of dexterity and legerdemain, in order to collect money from the crowds who follow them; and it muſt be allowed, that in theſe feats the Hindoos excel all mankind.

The Hindoo tradeſmen of all deſcriptions, are characteriſed by the ſimplicity of their tools, the ſmallneſs of their number, and by the want of all complex machinery. In the manufacture of fine muſlin, in which they excel all the world, the wheel, the reel, and the loom, are of a ſimple and artleſs ſtructure, yet the work produced cannot be equalled by European machinery, aided by every effort of ingenuity and ſkill. This, however, is perhaps the only manufacture in which the ſuperior art and capital of Europeans has not yet enabled them to ſurpaſs their teachers; for in the common price goods, all the variety and elegance of pattern is of Britiſh origin.

The articles furniſhed by the black ſmith, ſilver and gold ſmiths, cannot be compared either in ſtrength or elegance with the productions of Europe,

rope, though they ſurpriſe by the inefficiency of the tools by which they are fabricated. The brazier and blackſmith generally carry about with them their ſcanty ſtock of implements, conſiſting of little more than a hammer, a file, and pair of tongs, with a bellows: the forge is ſoon conſtructed, the anvil being frequently a ſtone; and when the work is finiſhed, they pack up their utenſils, and ſet out in queſt of a new employer. The carpenter has ſeldom any inſtrument beyond the ſaw, the hammer, the chiſel, and an ill contrived adze: the ground is his bench, and his foot holds the wood; but the work which occupies him a month would be completed by our workmen in three or four days.

In all the more laborious profeſſions, the want of proper implements and machinery is ſtill more ſenſibly felt: the thraſhing and grinding of corn are tedious and ſevere proceſſes in rural labour, which the Hindoo ingenuity has made no effectual effort to ſhorten or facilitate. A water mill, or ſteam-engine, guided by a ſingle perſon, performs in one day, more than the labour of an hundred women, at the hand mill: and it is probable that the invention of machinery has abridged the tedious labour of ſpinning cotton to leſs than a fiftieth part.

In naval architecture, as a ſcience, the Orientals were totally deficient on the firſt arrival of Europeans; in its practice as an art, they were ſlow and awkward. This employment requiring the united appli-

application of ſkill and machinery, and hard labour, the work of a ſingle carpenter is equal to that of ten natives; his wages, however, are in the ſame proportion, and ſhip-building is nearly of equal expence whether executed by European or native labour. The buſineſs of ſhip-building affords a happy illuſtration of the mutual benefit derived from their intercourſe by theſe two races of men. European capital and ſkill, has enabled the Hindoos to build many of the beſt ſhips that navigate the ſea, who formerly could execute nothing ſuperior to the wretched craft that had for twenty centuries plied upon the Ganges. The warm climate of India would have rendered the knowledge of Europeans uſeleſs and inefficient, unleſs they had been ſupplied with operative hands habituated to theſe tropical regions.

THE different occupations of tanners, leather ſellers, and ſhoemakers, equally demonſtrate the imperfection of the Indian artiſts, and the benefit they have received from their intercourſe with Europe. Formerly theſe tradeſmen were treated as the vileſt and moſt worthleſs of human beings: they had no implements, but their laſt and their knife; no proviſion of leather, or ſtock of goods: whoever needed a pair of ſhoes, had to pay the price in advance to the tradeſman, who bought the animal whoſe hide was to furniſh the material. So ill conducted was the whole proceſs, that in a few days he prepared the leather, and delivered the ſhoes. Their working in leather, and eating of fleſh, has, in the eyes of the Hin-

Hindoos, caſt a degree of infamy upon their caſt which no effort of Europeans can remove: they are ſtill ranked among the moſt degraded of men; and dwell in huts ſeparate from the towns and villages; but new proceſſes in tanning have been introduced, and ſhoes are manufactured by them nearly equal to thoſe imported from Europe, and at one third of the price. The countenance of Europeans being withheld by no prejudice againſt their profeſſion, it is poſſible that their humiliating condition has been in ſome degree ſoftened of its rigour.

THE watering of land in a hot climate, is an operation equally neceſſary, as it is laborious and fatiguing: in no part of India is this work much abridged by machinery; in many parts it is drawn from wells by the ſtrength of cattle; in others it is lifted from reſervoirs by human labour, by the moſt inartificial method. A common baſket, made watertight with a ſort of pitch, is attached to a rope, and ſwung by two men, one on each ſide, holding the rope; in one part of the circumference it deſcribes, it is filled with water, which is emptied as it aſcends to a higher elevation. This is far more laborious, and leſs effectual than the water wheels of the Chineſe; which, awkwardly as they are conſtructed, raiſe many tuns of water in the ſpace of a few hours.

THE STATE OF MARRIED WOMEN AMONG THE MAHOMMEDANS.

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Caunpore, Jan. 1798.

Of this important part of domeſtic economy among Aſiatics, Europeans are, notwithſtanding all that has been written upon the ſubject, worſe informed than of any other. The very name of the apartments deſtined for the reſidence of married women, Haram, (forbidden), implies the excluſion of all ſtrangers, particularly males, from theſe abodes. Our medical gentlemen, (and even with them the occurrence is very rare), are the only perſons ever ſuffered to approach the dwelling of a married woman of rank: when in caſe of any dangerous illneſs a phyſician is applied to, he is only permitted to approach the door of the apartment, which is covered with a ſcreen, and there he muſt preſcribe without ſeeing her, according to the replies he receives to his enquiries relating to her complaint. Hence the various rela-

tions, regarding the privileges, cuſtoms, and employment of Aſiatic females, are generally the offſpring of the narrator's vanity, and may be regarded as deſtitute of truth and accuracy, ſince the writers enjoyed no opportunity of better information. Of the general fact, only, the ſecluſion of all females of rank, an European can decide; and when he urges the advantages of a freer intercourſe on the female character, he can ſpeak on no ſubject on which he is leſs likely to perſuade. To a Muſſulman, our notions regarding the treatment of females, always appear abſurd, and ridiculous; and he ſeldom ſeems more ſatisfied with his wiſdom, than when he expatiates on the bad conſequences which are ſometimes the reſult of them.

It was in a converſation on this ſubject, with a learned Muſſulman, who lately viſited England, that we are indebted for "A Vindication of the Liberties of Aſiatic Women," written in Perſian by Abu Taleb Khan, a native of Lucknow, in the province of Owde. This paper, the production of a learned Aſiatic, upon this intereſting ſubject, has been tranſlated, and preſerved in the Aſiatic Annual Regiſter, as a more authentic document, than perhaps the public are yet in poſſeſſion of, relating to the married ſtate of the Orientaliſts.

"One day, ſays Abul Taleb, in a certain company, the converſation turned upon *liberty*, in reſpect of which the Engliſh conſider their own cuſtoms

toms as the moſt perfect in the world. An Engliſh lady, addreſſing herſelf to me, obſerved, that the women of Aſia had no liberty at all, but live like ſlaves, without honour, and without authority, in the houſes of their huſbands; and ſhe cenſured the men for their unkindneſs, and the women alſo, for ſubmitting to be ſo undervalued. However much I attempted, by various ways, to undeceive her, by obſerving, that the truth is exactly the reverſe, (for it is the European women who do not poſſeſs ſo much power), yet it did not bring conviction to her mind. She, however, began to waver in her own opinion, and falling into doubt, requeſted of me to write ſomething on the ſubject, the purport of which ſhe might comprehend at one view, and be enabled to diſtinguiſh the truth from falſehood.

"SINCE the ſame wrong opinion is deeply rooted in the minds of all other Europeans, and has been frequently held forth, I conſidered it neceſſary to write a few lines concerning the privileges of the female ſex, as eſtabliſhed both by law and cuſtom, in Aſia, and in Europe, omitting whatever was common to both, and noticing what is peculiar to each, in the manner of compariſon, that the diſtinction may be the more eaſily made, and the real ſtate of the caſe become evident to thoſe capable of diſcernment.

"IT muſt firſt be laid down as a general maxim, that in ſocial order, reſpect to the rules of politeneſs, and

and forbearance from injury, is a neceſſary condition; for, otherwiſe, the liberty of one would be deſtructive of the liberty of another: thus, if a perſon be at liberty to do in his own houſe what may endanger the ſafety of his neighbour's, this muſt be in direct oppoſition to the liberty of that neighbour; or, if in order to free himſelf from the inconvenience of the hot weather, he ſhould viſit his friend in his dreſſing gown, or night ſhirt, although it would be eaſe and liberty to him, yet it would be ſowing the ſeeds of ill-breeding; therefore the obſervance of theſe rules is eſſential.

"THOSE things which make the liberty of the Aſiatic women appear leſs than that of the Europeans, are in my opinion ſix: *Firſt*, The little intercourſe with men, and concealment from view, agreeable to law, and their own habits; and this is the chief of the whole; for it has been the cauſe of thoſe falſe notions entertained by European women, that the inclination of the Aſiatic females leads them to walk out in the ſtreets, and market places, and that their huſbands keep them ſhut up, and ſet guards upon their door. It may be here obſerved, that the advantages of this *little* intercourſe, which prevents all the evils from the admittance of ſtrangers, and affords ſo much time for employment and uſeful work, are ſo very manifeſt, that they need not be enlarged upon: the practice in London of keeping the doors of the houſes ſhut, and the contemptible condition of the Dutch at the Cape of Good Hope, are

are ſufficient proofs. If, notwithſtanding this, the cuſtom of the intercourſe of the ſexes is allowed in England, it is owing both to the force of cuſtom, and good morals among the Engliſh, and to the apprehenſion of greater inconveniences in the contrary practice. The chief of theſe inconveniences are four; firſt the high price of all things, and the ſmall number of ſervants, and rooms; for were there a ſeparate houſe and table, and equipage for the wife, the expence would be too great to be borne; and therefore of neceſſity both huſband and wife eat their food, with their gueſts in one place, ſleep together in the ſame chamber; and cannot avoid being always in each other's company: whereas in Aſia, where by the cheapneſs of work, the women have ſeparate apartments for themſelves, they have not to make their time and convenience ſuit that of their huſbands. When their particular friends are with them, they do not deſire their huſband's company for ſeveral days, but ſend his victuals to him in the murdannah, (men's apartment); and, in like manner, when the huſband wiſhes to be undiſturbed, he eats and ſleeps in the murdannah.

"A *ſecond* reaſon for this intercourſe in England is, the coldneſs of the climate, which requires exerciſe and walking, and the huſband to ſleep in the ſame bed with his wife: but concealment from view is incompatible with walking; and as for the ſecond caſe, the want of room is the cauſe: for it is natural for mankind, when under diſtreſs and affliction of mind,

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to wiſh frequently for retirement and privacy, by ſleeping alone.

"A *third* cauſe is, the people here being all of one race; for in this kingdom, placed in a corner of the globe, where there is no coming nor going of foreigners, the intercourſe of the ſexes is not attended with the ſame conſequences of a corruption of manners, as in Aſia, where people of various nations dwell in the ſame city; and to allow the women ſuch a liberty there, where there is ſuch danger of corruption, would be an encroachment upon the liberty of the men, which (as ſhewn in the beginning) is contrary to juſtice. That a corruption of manners muſt enſue, where various kinds of people mix together, is too evident to need demonſtration. Before the Muſſulmans entered Hindoſtan, the women did not conceal themſelves from view; and even now, in all the Hindoo villages, it is not cuſtomary: and it is well known how inviolable the Hindoos preſerve their own cuſtoms, and how obſtinately they are attached to them: but now ſo rigidly do women in the great towns obſerve this practice of concealment from view, that the bride does not even ſhew herſelf to her father-in-law, and the ſiſter comes but ſeldom into the preſence of her brother.

"A *fourth* cauſe of the cuſtom in Europe is, the neceſſity which the women there have to acquire experience in the affairs of the world, and to learn various arts on account of the duty laid upon them of taking

taking part in their huſband's buſineſs. This experience could not be obtained by keeping in concealment; whereas the duties of Aſiatic women conſiſting only in having the cuſtody of the huſband's property, and bringing up the children, they have no occaſion for ſuch experience, or for laying aſide their own cuſtom of concealment. What has been juſt ſaid, was to ſhew that the Aſiatic women have no neceſſity to expoſe their perſons; but it muſt alſo be obſerved that they have many reaſons for preferring privacy. One is the love of leiſure, and repoſe from the fatigue of motion; a ſecond, their deſire of preſerving their honour by not mixing with the vulgar, nor ſuffering the inſults of the low and rude, who are always paſſing along the ſtreets. This feeling they have in common with the wives of European noblemen, who, to preſerve their dignity, are never ſeen walking on the ſtreets; and alſo with ladies in private life, who, when walking out at night, and even in the day, are always attended by a male friend, or ſervant, who protects them.

"THE notion which the European women have, that the women of Aſia never ſee a man's face but their huſband's, and are debarred from all amuſement and ſociety, proceeds entirely from miſinformation: they can keep company with their huſband's and father's male relations, and with old neighbours and domeſtics; and at meals there are always many men and women of this deſcription preſent: and they can go in palankeens to the houſes

houſes of their relations, and of ladies of their own rank, even though the huſbands are unacquainted; and alſo to walk in the gardens, after ſtrangers are excluded; and they can ſend for muſicians, and dancers to entertain them at their own houſes; and they have many other modes of amuſement beſides thoſe mentioned.

"THE ſecond cauſe why the liberty of Aſiatic women appears leſs than that of Europeans is, the privilege of the huſband, by law, to marry ſeveral wives. This, to the European women, ſeems a grievous oppreſſion; and they hold thoſe very cheap who ſubmit to it. But, in truth, the cauſe of this law and cuſtom is the nature of the female ſex themſelves, which ſeparates them from the huſband, the ſeveral laſt months of pregnancy, and time of ſuckling; and beſides theſe the Aſiatic women have many other times of being ſeparate from their huſbands. This privilege not being allowed by the Engliſh law, is indeed a great hardſhip upon the Engliſh huſbands; whereas the Aſiatic law permitting polygamy, does the huſband juſtice, and wrongs not the wife; for the honour of the firſt, and *equal* wife is not affected by it: thoſe women who ſubmit to marry with a married man, not being admitted into the ſociety of ladies, as they are never of high or wealthy families, no man of honour ever allowing his daughter to make ſuch a marriage.

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"THE mode in which theſe other wives live is this; thoſe who are of genteel extraction, have a ſeparate houſe for themſelves, like kept miſtreſſes in England; and thoſe who are not, live in the houſe of the equal wife, like ſervants, and the huſband at times conveys himſelf to them in a clandeſtine manner. Beſides, theſe wives cannot invade any of the rights of the equal wife; for although they and their children are by law entitled to inheritance, yet ſince the equal wife never marries without a very large dowry ſettled upon her, all that the huſband leaves goes to the payment of this dowry, and nothing remains for his heirs. The opinion, that the men of Aſia have three or four wives, is very ill-founded, for in common they have only one; out of a thouſand there will be fifty perſons who have from one to two, and ten out of theſe who have not more than two. The fear of the bad conſequences of polygamy makes men ſubmit with patience to the times of ſeparation from the equal wife, as much the better way; for, from what I know, it is eaſier to live with two tygreſſes than two wives.

"THE third cauſe, is the power of divorce being in the hands of the huſband. This is ordained by law, but not practiſed; for if a great offence be the motive to divorce a wife, and if it be proved againſt her, ſhe receives puniſhment by the order of the magiſtrate, or from the huſband, with the concurrence of all her relations; and if the offence be of a trivial nature, ſuch as a difference of temper and inſociabi-

lity, the huſband puniſhes her by leaving the female apartment, and living in his own. But the reaſon for divorce being at the will of the huſband, lies in the very juſtice of the law, and the diſtinction of the male ſex over the female, on account of the greater ſhare they take in the management of the world; for all the laborious work falls to their lot, ſuch as carrying heavy burdens, going to war, repulſing enemies, &c. and the women generally ſpend their lives in repoſe and quiet. Nevertheleſs, if a wife eſtabliſh a criminal offence againſt her huſband, ſuch as an unfair diſtribution of his time among them, or a diminution of the neceſſaries of life, ſhe can obtain a divorce in ſpite of him.

"THE fourth is, the little credit the law attaches to the evidence of women in Aſia; for, in a court of juſtice, every fact is proved by the teſtimony of two men; but if women be the witneſſes, four are required. This does not ariſe from the ſuperiority of the one over the other, but it is founded on the little experience and knowledge women poſſeſs, and the fickleneſs of their diſpoſition.

"THE fifth is, the Aſiatic women having to leave off going to balls and entertainments, and wearing ſhewy dreſſes and ornaments, after the death of their huſbands. This is owing to their great affection for their huſbands' memory; and their own modes and habits; for there is nothing to prevent a woman from doing otherwiſe, or marrying a ſecond huſband, but the

the dread of expoſing herſelf to the ridicule and cenſure of women of her own rank.

"THE ſixth is, the Aſiatic daughters not having the liberty of chooſing their huſbands. On this head nothing need be ſaid; for in Europe this liberty is merely nominal, ſince without the will of the father and mother the daughter's choice is of no avail; and in its effects, it ſerves only to encourage running away (as the male and female ſlaves in India do), and to breed coldneſs and trouble among the members of a family. But granting that ſuch a liberty does exiſt in England, the deſpair and miſery it muſt always entail are very evident. The choice of a girl juſt come from the nurſery, and deſirous by nature to get a huſband, in an affair upon which the happineſs of her whole life depends, can neither deſerve that reſpect nor conſideration which is due to the choice of her parents, who have profited by experience, and are not blinded by paſſion.

"BUT what the Aſiatic women have more than the European, both by law and cuſtom, may be ranked under eight heads: "Firſt, Their power over the property and children of the huſband by cuſtom; for the men of Aſia conſider the principal object of marriage, after the procreation of their own ſpecies for the worſhip of God, two things, the one to have their money and effects taken care of, and the other to have their children brought up, ſo that they themſelves being entirely diſengaged of theſe concerns,

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may turn the whole of their endeavours to the attainment of their various purſuits. The chief part, therefore, of whatever wealth they may acquire, they give in charge to their wives, and thus the women have it in their power to annihilate in one day, the product of a whole life. Although this ſeldom happens, yet it often occurs, that the huſband who has amaſſed a large fortune in youth and power, and has delivered it in charge to his wife, when he demands it back in old age and neceſſity, ſhe does not allow him more than daily ſupport, and lays the reſt up in a place of ſecurity for the ſake of her children. And ſo great is the power they poſſeſs, as to the diſpoſal of their children, that frequently they are brought up without any education, or die in childhood; for the women, on account of their little ſenſe, are never pleaſed to part with their children, by ſending them to ſchool, and to acquire experience by travelling; and when they fall ſick, they give them improper medicines, by the advice of their own confidents; or, from their ſoftneſs of heart, indulge them in whatever it is the nature of the ſick to take a longing for, and thus they cauſe their death.

"SECOND, Their power by cuſtom, as to the marriage of their children, and choice of their religious faith; for if the huſband wiſhes to give one of them in marriage to a perſon the mother diſapproves of, the match does not take place, but in the other way it generally does. All the children, both male and female, from being moſtly in the company of the mother,

mother, and looking upon her as their protector againſt the father, whom, on account of his wiſhing to have them educated, they conſider as their tormentor, follow the religious tenets of their mother, and remain perfect ſtrangers to thoſe of their father. It often happens where the wife is a Schiah, and the huſband a Sounie, the children having been Schias from their own natural diſpoſition, and the inſtruction of the mother, ſpeak diſreſpectfully of the chiefs of the Sounie ſect, in their father's preſence; and he who never all his life bore ſuch language from any perſon, but was ready to put the ſpeaker of it to death, has no redreſs but patiently to hear it from them, as, on account of their want of underſtanding, they are excuſeable: and thus by frequent repetition, his attachment to his faith is ſhaken, and in the courſe of time, he either forſakes it entirely, or remains in it with lukewarmneſs.

"THIRD, Their authority over their ſervants; for the ſervants of the Murdannah, the keeping and changing of whom is in the hands of the huſband, through fear of expoſing themſelves to the diſpleaſure of the wife, when ſhe finds a proper opportunity, by their committing ſome fault, which ſervants are conſtantly doing, are more obedient to her, than their own maſters: and the ſervants of the Zenana, whom the wife has the care of retaining, or turning off, ſtand ſo much in awe of their miſtreſs, that many of them paſs their whole lives in the Zenana, without ever once coming into the preſence of the huſband. Some

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of them never perform any ſervice for him at all, and others who do, enter not into diſcourſe with him; and the women are ſo obſtinate in this reſpect, that their huſbands never can turn off one of the ſervants, but his very complaint againſt them is a recommendation; and his recommendation has the effect of a complaint, by ſubjecting them to their miſtreſs's reſentment.

"CONTRARY to this is the manner of the European ladies, who have not their own will with their children and ſervants, but live more like free and familiar gueſts in their huſbands' houſes; and the houſehold eſtabliſhment and equipage being common to both, if any part, as the carriage, for example, is previouſly employed by the one, the other has to wait till it is diſengaged: of this there is no doubt, that if a quarrel enſues between an Engliſh huſband and wife, the wife has to leave the houſe, and ſeek her dinner, either at her father's, or a friend's; whereas in Aſia, it is the huſband who has to go out; for frequently the utenſils of cookery are not kept in the murdannah.

"FOURTH, The freedom, by cuſtom of the Aſiatic women from aſſiſting in the buſineſs of the huſband, or ſervice of his gueſts; whereas this is generally the buſineſs of European wives, whether their huſbands be of a genteel buſineſs, ſuch as jewellery, mercery, or perfumery, or the more ſervile ones; I have ſeen many riſe from their dinner to anſwer the demands

demands of a purchaſer: and although all theſe duties are not required of the ladies, yet ſome, eſpecially the entertaining of the gueſts, carving and helping the diſhes at table, and making the tea and coffee are generally performed by them. Now the Aſiatic ladies have no ſuch duties at all; but live in the manner before deſcribed.

"FIFTH, The greater deference the Aſiatic ladies find paid to their humours, and preſcriptive right of teazing their huſbands by every pretext, which is conſidered as an eſſential quality of beauty: for if a wife does not put theſe in practice, but is ſubmiſſive to her huſband's will in every thing, her charms very ſoon loſe their brilliancy in his eyes. Thus, when a wife goes to viſit her father, ſhe will not return to her huſband, till he has come himſelf ſeveral times to fetch her; and being as often vexed by her breaking her promiſe. And every day when dinner is ſerved, by pretending to be engaged at the time, ſhe keeps her huſband waiting, and does not come till the meat is cold; and in the ſame manner, at bed-time; for returning quickly from their father's houſe, is conſidered as a ſign of fondneſs for the huſband, which looks ill, as they think; and coming ſoon to dinner, in their opinion, betrays the diſpoſition of a hungry beggar. In theſe and ſuch caſes, the huſband has nothing for it but patience; nay, it ever pleaſes him. I have known many beautiful women, conſtant in their affection, and obedient to their huſbands night and day, whom for want of theſe qualities, their huſbands

bands quickly grew tired of, and unjuſtly deſerted, for the ſake of plain women who poſſeſſed them.

"SIXTH, The greater reliance placed by the Aſiatic huſbands in their wives' virtue, both from law and cuſtom. Although European ladies can go out of doors, and diſcourſe with ſtrangers, yet this is not allowed, unleſs they have a truſty perſon along with them, either of the huſband's or the father's; and ſleeping out all night is abſolutely denied them. The Aſiatic ladies, on the contrary, when they go to the houſe of a lady of their acquaintance, though their huſbands be entire ſtrangers, are not attended by any perſon of the huſband's or father's, and they ſpend not only one or two nights in that houſe, but even a whole week: and in ſuch a houſe, though the maſter is prohibited from entering the apartments where they are, yet the young men of fifteen, belonging to the family or relations, under the name of children, have free acceſs, and eat with and enter into the amuſements of their gueſts.

"SEVENTH, Their ſhare in the children by law. For if a divorce happens, the ſons go to the father, and the daughters to the mother, contrary to the cuſtom in England, where if a divorce happens, the mother, who for twenty years may have toiled and conſumed herſelf in bringing up her children, has to abandon all to the father, and full of grief and affliction, leave his houſe.

"EIGHTH,

"EIGHTH, The caſe both by law and cuſtom, with which the wife may ſeparate herſelf from her huſband, when there may be a quarrel between them, without producing a divorce. Thus the wife, in an hour's time after the diſpute, ſets off with the children and her property to the houſe of her father, or relations, and until her huſband makes her ſatisfaction ſhe does not return: and this ſhe can always do without a moment's delay.

"BESIDES theſe eight, as above noticed, of the ſuperior advantages the Aſiatic women enjoy over the European, there are many others here omitted for brevity's ſake. What has been ſaid is enough for people of diſcernment*."

* Abu Taleb is a man of high rank and character, and has been employed in ſituations of great truſt by the government of Owde, and by the Marquis Cornwallis: he is better acquainted with the ſubject than any European can pretend to be; yet as he ſeems to have a *caſe* to make out in this vindication of the rights of Aſiatic wives, he is probably not to be believed to the full extent of every aſſertion, though upon the whole a credible evidence.

DESCRIPTION OF AN EUROPEAN CANTONMENT.

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Caunpore, Jan. 1798.

THIS is the largeſt military ſtation in this part of India; and may be regarded as the head-quarters of the field army in the pay of the Nabob Vizier. The buildings erected at the public expence, are barracks for the European infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with a general hoſpital for the reception of the ſick. Theſe are conducted with economy and neatneſs, after a regular plan, and are perhaps better adapted for the ſervice, than the more expenſive erections at Dinapore, Barhampore, and the Preſidency. The officers of every deſcription, provide their own lodgings, which conſiſt of very commodious and elegant Bungalows, built without any regularity, on a ſpace extending about ſix miles along the Ganges.

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EACH Bungalow, with its garden, out-houſes, and appendages, is called an eſtate, in the purchaſe of which, and in the poſition of his buildings, every individual was left to conſult his taſte, convenience, or caprice. You can therefore expect no regularity or arrangement in the cantonments: what is ſtill more inconvenient, the buildings are ſo much ſcattered and detached, that they cannot be protected againſt thieves by all the troops they contain. Each proprietor of a houſe is obliged to hire a number of *Chokedars* (watchmen) proportioned to his property, and upon theſe terms only can he depend on protection. Theſe watchmen are enrolled under a chief, and are either thieves themſelves, or ſo intimately connected with the profeſſion, that they are found by experience to be the beſt qualified to detect them. One thing is pretty certain, whoever pays the Chokedars is ſecure; whoever neglects to hire them is plundered.

CAUNPORE is ſituated in the upper part of that vaſt plain, which extends from the bay of Bengal to the mountains of Thibet; an immenſe valley far ſurpaſſing the extent of Egypt, and probably unequalled in any part of the globe. The ſoil is not only all arable, but, with proper cultivation, capable of being rendered extremely fertile. A moſt eſſential branch of huſbandry is watering; and for this purpoſe the wells are innumerable. You cannot ride out in any direction without meeting with ſo great numbers,

numbers, that accidents are not unfrequent of horſes tumbling into them with their riders.

ANOTHER annoyance of the troops at this ſtation, and which they cannot poſſibly avoid, is the duſt towards the cloſe of the dry ſeaſon. From the middle of October till the middle of June, there is ſeldom a ſingle ſhower of rain. The ground becomes parched to a cinder; and all vegetation except on the watered fields is deſtroyed. The tread of horſes, camels, and bullocks, looſens each day a certain quantity of duſt upon the ſurface, which the hot winds beginning regularly to blow in the afternoon, raiſe into the air in the form of a thick cloud, which not only hides the ſun, but envelopes the whole ſtation in midnight darkneſs. At this ſeaſon, contending warriors are firſt diſcernible to each other by the clouds of duſt which hover above them; nor can an individual of either be diſtinguiſhed till they are almoſt in contact, when the artillery and muſketry has the appearance of thunder burſting from a cloud. The hiſtory of the country affords many inſtances of battles loſt or won by the direction of the duſt; a windward poſition gives an army an advantage ſomewhat ſimilar to the weather gage in an action at ſea.

To inhale into the lungs for ſeveral months together an atmoſphere loaded with duſt, muſt prove hurtful as well as diſagreeable; yet neither the Hindoos nor Mahommedans have fallen upon any contrivance

trivance to remedy this evil. Before the arrival of the Europeans there was not a houſe in all India furniſhed with glaſs windows; even at preſent, when glaſs is ſo common here, I believe none of the natives have availed themſelves of ſo obvious a remedy. Glaſs is conſidered by the Europeans as an indiſpenſible requiſite in the conſtruction of every Bungalow at the upper ſtations: they have even introduced the uſe of it into the camp. Several officers carry, on their march, a frame of glaſs, which they fix in the windward door of their tents, during the hot winds, ſhould the ſervice call them into the field at that ſeaſon.

It has been propoſed to protect this cantonment, by drawing a kind of rampart from the Ganges at the upper bank, to the lower end of the ſtation; a line of about ſix miles in length. Againſt an enemy this would prove hardly any defence; from the thieves it would probably afford ſtill leſs protection, ſince the far greater part of them are juſtly ſuſpected of reſiding within the cantonments. It would however protect the native huts from the incurſions of the wolf, an animal from which they ſuffer frequent and dreadful alarms. Hardly a night paſſes in which they do not daſh into ſome corner of the camp, where their purpoſe is to carry off the children that may be found ſtraggling near the huts; and it is painful to reflect how often they ſucceed. Their ſtrength enables them to carry off a child of three or four years, though

parents, who are pierced with the cries of their child without any poſſibility of affording it relief. The inhabitants of the ſouth of Europe are much annoyed by the wolf, but in India he is far more deſtructive; becauſe here the audacity of every predatory animal is increaſed by the experience they all have of the averſion that the Hindoos entertain to the ſhedding of even the blood of noxious beaſts. If they are ever rouſed to enſnare theſe animals, it is by the Europeans who pay them a certain ſum for bringing them alive for the purpoſe of affording them ſport in the chace.

THE method in which the natives defend their crop from the granivous animals, ſhews how ſtrongly their religious prejudices operate in this particular. The watchmen are provided with no offenſive weapons, excepting a ſling; on the contrary, they continue the whole day ſtanding in one ſingle poſition upon a pillar of clay raiſed about ten feet, where they remain bellowing continually, that they may terrify, without hurting, the birds who feed upon the crop. Every conſiderable field contains ſeveral ſuch centinels ſtationed at different corners, who repeat the call from one to another ſo inceſſantly, that the invaders have hardly any opportunity of making good a livelihood in the field.

THE occupation of watching a field in India, muſt prove, one ſhould imagine, one of the moſt tedious and diſagreeable in which a human being could be

be placed. To ſtand for days and months expoſed naked to a vertical ſun, without the power of moving ſix inches from the ſpot, is a ſtate compared to which a priſon in England may be regarded as affording the luxury of a prince. Yet how many thouſands here are doomed to limit their intellectual and bodily enjoyments to this narrow ſphere; and what is ſtill more ſurpriſing with apparent contentment. The wants of nature are here few; and the mental exertions neceſſary to ſupply them, however ſmall, are ſufficient to occupy a mind, enlarged but a little beyond that of a brute.

THE real wants of nature, whatever they may be, muſt be ſupplied: the foxes have holes; the birds have neſts; ſo our field watchmen are forced during the rains to erect, inſtead of a clay pillar, a ſcaffolding of wood as high as the crop, over which they ſuſpend a roof of ſtraw to ſhelter their naked bodies from the rain. This though conſtructed with much leſs labour and ingenuity, than many animals diſplay in preparing their dwelling, has the ſame effect; it protects them from the inclemency of the elements to which they muſt otherwiſe fall a ſacrifice. Theſe watchmen are entertained over and above the complement of herdſmen for the cattle, and their number is much greater. Experience muſt have aſcertained their uſe; to an European it would appear that, as birds muſt have ſupport, they probably ſnatch that ſupport from theſe watches either by day or during the night: to him therefore

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it appears ſuperfluous to reſiſt demands that one way or other muſt be ſatisfied.

A concourſe of Europeans in any part of the country, always draws after it a proportional number of natives; a battalion cannot march in any direction without an accompanyment of camp followers thrice its own number. Ten thouſand ſoldiers ſtationed for any conſiderable time, will bring a population of five times that amount to their neighbourhood. Merchants, tradeſmen, and ſervants of every denomination, find their account in following the train; and no inconſiderable portion of the pay of the army reverts to the ſame ſource from which it was drawn, to the former for cattle, grain, and vegetables, and to the artificer for his labour.

Hence agriculture in the vicinity of Caunpore, has profited by the ſtimulus of an European market, and high prices. Not only Indian corn, but gram, barley and wheat are cultivated to an extent equal to the demand. Turnips, cabbages, and European vegetables, are at this ſeaſon in great abundance, not only in the gardens of officers, but in the fields cultivated by the natives. Grapes, peaches, with a profuſion of fruit, have long ſince been ſupplied by the Europeans. The culture of the grape in India requires care, and appears to be of European extraction.

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The ſugar plantations are neither numerous nor extenſive; I ſuppoſe from the want of conſumpt in this interior ſituation. The few fields I have ſeen are remarkably abundant, and rich: the crop is at preſent nearly ripe, and nothing can evince the fertility of the ſoil more ſtrongly, than the compariſon of the ſugar with the adjoining crops; the former though tall, and ſo thick, as to render it impenetrable to the rays of the ſun, is yet far ſurpaſſed by the juar, and palma chriſti, which here riſe to the height of ten or twelve feet. Nothing in nature can ſurpaſs in luxuriance a country covered with ſuch crops; but unfortunately cultivation is here frequently interrupted by the intervention of extenſive waſtes reſembling the large commons in England. Theſe are at this ſeaſon ſcorched to barrenneſs, every particle of verdure being burnt up, nothing meets the eye except barren ſand or duſt floating with the wind. The ſoil of theſe waſtes ſeems to be eſſentially the ſame as that which is ſo fertile under cultivation, and did the population require, it could be rendered equally productive by the labour of a ſingle ſeaſon. Incomplete as the huſbandry is, the value of the zemindary around our cantonments muſt have increaſed in a high degree ſince this was made a ſtation. In what proportion this increaſed value is ſhared by the Zemindar and the Nawaub, I have not learnt. No event alters the condition of the Ryut: poverty is invariably his lot however circumſtances may change.

MODE OF LIVING AMONG THE MILITARY AND CIVIL OFFICERS.

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Caunpore, Jan. 1798.

THE mode of living in this part of India has, within the laſt ten or fifteen years, undergone a very great alteration. Before that period the civil and military ſervants of the company in the firſt rank were lodged in Bungalows worſe than thoſe of a ſubaltern of the preſent day: as the practice of feeding beef, mutton, pork, and poultry, was not then introduced, their tables were very poorly ſupplied; even vegetables were not to be had; though an article indiſpenſibly neceſſary in this climate. Their inconveniences were aggravated by a conſtant routine of irregularity. After dinner it was the uſual cuſtom to go to ſleep, in the hotteſt time of the day; from this every party was awakened in the evening, to partake of a ſupper, which protracted a drunken ſederunt till a late hour of the next morning.

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AMIDST continued repletion, and frequent irregularity, the climate operated with fatal influence; for trying as Bengal ſtill is to almoſt every European conſtitution, there was a time when it was deemed far more hoſtile. A reformation highly commendable has been effected, partly from neceſſity; but more by the example of a late governor general, whoſe elevated rank and noble birth gave him in a great meaſure the guidance of faſhion. Regular hours and ſobriety of conduct became as decidedly the teſt of a man of faſhion, as they were formerly of irregularity. Thouſands owe their lives, and many more their health, to this change, which had neither been reckoned upon, nor even foreſeen by thoſe who introduced it.

ONE ſpecies of diſſipation often leads to others: the late hours and hard drinking induced gaming, which prevailed to a degree ruinous to many individuals: the ſame nobleman, above alluded to, by giving this practice his decided diſapprobation, and promoting ſuch as refrained from it, has in a great degree leſſened the habit, by bringing it into diſgrace. Much diſſipation, however, ſtill remains: it is the prevailing vice of the military character in every country; and the prevalence of it in India ſome have regarded as the deſtruction of our power in the Eaſt: they allege "That this has gradually weakened, and and at laſt diſſolved the connection of every country with its diſtant dominions, and that we are not to expect a miracle wrought in our behalf to effect an exemption

emption from the common cataſtrophe of nations. What Mr. Hume ſays of deſpotiſm, may be with equal juſtice aſſerted of the growth of ſelfiſh and diſſolute manners, it is the *Euthanaſia* of our empire in this part of the world."

THEY ſuggeſt too, "That other circumſtances may intervene to prevent either a natural or an eaſy diſſolution. An independent army, involved in debt by extravagance, or ſtimulated by avarice, may ſeize, *brevi manu*, all our poſſeſſions for themſelves, while the infamy of the treaſon may ſink or diſappear, amidſt the univerſal depravity. Where the principle of promotion is length of ſervice, without any other conſideration, the moſt worthleſs and diſſolute may look forward to command with as much confidence as the moſt meritorious officer. If diligence, bravery, and good conduct be attended with no advantage, they will be ſoon abandoned and ridiculed as uſeleſs qualifications. A perſon receiving a commiſſion, inſtead of regarding it as an obligation to diſcharge the duties of a laborious profeſſion, will conſider it a kind of freehold property yielding him a certain annual ſum, which nothing but death can deprive him of."

THEY aſſert, "That among thoſe who are accuſtomed to command, an independent, haughty, and imperious character becomes unavoidable, unleſs they are in their turn ſubjected to the control of a ſuperior. This control, however, is entirely aboliſhed, the

the moment you allow an officer to regard every ſtep of promotion as a right poſitively conferred by his own ſervice independent of the will of any ſuperior."

"THAT if with all thoſe circumſtances, you grant a liberty to each officer who applies for it to remove into any other corps, as often as intereſt or caprice ſhall ſuggeſt, even the ſubaltern will be releaſed from every tie of ſubordination. Does his conduct give offence to his ſuperior officer, he exchanges into another regiment, and bids him defiance. Subordination among officers not only ceaſes; but the diſcipline of the private men is totally neglected. The diligent and faithful officer, by this ſyſtem, can look for no more than he who is totally unacquainted with the ſervice. That in this climate, without ſome motive to induſtry, there will not long remain the appearance of exertion; Parade duty will ſoon be neglected, and neither officers nor men will retain ſufficient knowledge of their duty, to be of any ſervice, except drawing their monthly allowances."

"THAT ſubalterns rendered independent of their ſuperior officers, begin to treat them as their equals, and deſpiſe their authority; hence by attaching the general officers, you by no means ſecure the duty or attachment of the army: it becomes in your hands a rope of ſand, and only to be guided by its own intereſt or caprice. That an army, efficient in point of number, may thus become altogether inadequate to the defence or protection of the country: to its employ-

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ers only it can prove formidable; they may be conſidered, as at its diſcretion; or rather they may be regarded as having conſtructed an unwieldy and tottering edifice, which muſt cruſh them by its fall."

"THAT ſhould no dangerous enterprizes be undertaken by an army in this independent and inſubordinate ſtate, its diſcipline will ſoon ſo far decline, that hardly any military appearance, ſave that of the uniform, ſhall appear. The whole ſtudy of officers will be to ſecure ſituations of emolument, or ſuch parts of the ſervice as may ſuit their convenience or pleaſure."

"THAT theſe effects have not been diſcovered in the Company's army in India, they allege, is highly to the credit of the individuals who compoſe it. In that mixture which compoſes our military force in this part of the world, you meet with French, Dutch, Portugueſe, and wanderers from every nation in Europe: among theſe, however, there are not a few of reſpectable families in Britain, who, themſelves men of character, hope to return and ſpend in comfort the little competence acquired in the ſervice. Any enterprize involving the tranquillity of their country, or their own eſtimation at home, would preclude ſuch hopes, and therefore is avoided. Whatever may be the views of others of a different deſcription, nothing can be undertaken without a general concert and co-operation: hence it has been the fortune of our India poſſeſſions to hang by a thread,

thread, which their defenders have not yet agreed, with one heart and one mind, to touch; though, perhaps, ſecretly conſcious, that with the firſt breath of commotion it would be for ever broken."

THESE concluſions may appear plauſible, but they proceed on the ſuppoſition, that military gentlemen in this ſervice, are equally incapable of diſcerning their own intereſt, and of eſtimating their power. The revenues of India, under a military government, would probably ceaſe to be conſiderable; and would certainly fail to be engroſſed by one or a few military deſpots, who had transferred the powers of government to their own perſons. Their inferiors would only be treated with regard ſo long as they were the neceſſary tools of their ambition; the power of each was no ſooner ſecured, than he would ſpurn theſe aſſociates, as the abettors of one treaſon, or dread them as the projectors of a ſecond. On the moſt favourable ſuppoſition, that of unanimity among the officers on the diviſion of their ſpoils, a circumſtance, which perhaps never yet happened, a few only could command. The lot of the far greater part would be that of hirelings to a military uſurper, whoſe government and ſervice had no known rules, either of law, cuſtom or diſcretion. He pays no high compliment to the diſcernment of any ſet of men, who ſuppoſes that they would (abſtracting from the immorality of the buſineſs,) prefer ſuch a ſituation to the preſent ſervice, grievous, as in ſome inſtances, it may appear.

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It would be doing injuſtice to ſo numerous a body to ſuppoſe, that theſe conſequences are not foreſeen and fully weighed by many of them; on the idea that a change of government *could* be effected by the military force in India: But the poſſibility of their accompliſhing ſuch an object, ſeems more than doubtful. The European part of the army is a motely mixture of all nations, a ſmall bribe might engage them in any enterpriſe; but they are the moſt debauched and unprincipled troops any where to be met with; and would give no ſufficient ſupport to any cauſe, whether good or bad.

The native troops, in every thing the reverſe of the Europeans, would be guarded by their integrity from ſuch meaſures, unleſs diſguiſed under the appearance of duty. Such a deception would not be long ſupported, and as ſoon as the truth was diſcovered, they would be more apt to revenge themſelves upon their betrayers than to fight their battles.

Suppose, however, all theſe obſtacles overcome, and the country in poſſeſſion of the troops, how is a ſucceſſion of European officers and privates to be procured for the ſupport of diſcipline: In a few years the preſent race muſt yield to the ſeverity of the climate, and the diſcipline of a native corps, would not ſurvive the officers for ſix months. Then the Indian army would fall back to its original ſtate under native diſcipline, and could give no more

effectual

effectual oppoſition to Europeans than when they at firſt conquered this country.

In America the cauſe of revolt was conſtantly ſupported and ſtrengthened by a growing ſpirit of independence in every individual. In India ſuch a ſpirit never was felt, nor could ever be infuſed into a hundred perſons. The two cauſes are in direct oppoſition, and the reſult would be totally different. I know that ſome perſons, more accuſtomed to ſpeak than to think, have fancied they ſaw in India another America; but in the two countries every thing is contraſted: manners, education, habit and religion. And the man who imagines that a change in favour of freedom could be effected in the one as eaſily as the other, muſt be ignorant of both.

With a powerful fleet, it will long be in the power of Britain to tranſport a conſiderable force to India; while without a continual ſupply of European officers no diſcipline can be ſupported in native troops to oppoſe that force. A day of retribution very ſoon would unavoidably come, when the ſpirit of the nation would be avenged on its perfidious ſervants:—

Manet alte repoſtum
——Spreti injuria regni.

. . . . . .

Caunpore, Jan. 1798.

THE reign of Acber is an important æra in the annals of Hindoſtan: it continued half a century, and may be regarded as the Auguſtan Age of the Mahommedan Emperors. Fortunately for the information of poſterity, his intelligent miniſter Abul Fazel, has left a tolerably correct and detailed account of his government, and the ſtate of the country at this period; large allowance however muſt be made for the pompous deſcriptions of the grandeur of the monarch, and the fulſome adulation paid to his wiſdom, which are conſpicuous throughout this work, which he has entitled the Ayeen Acbery, or Mirror of Acber.

AT the death of this monarch in 1605, his dominions extended from the Thibet mountains on the north,

north, to the province of Viziapoor and Golconda on the ſouth; and from the borders of Aracan, Aſſam, and Bootan on the eaſt, to the river Altock, and Cubuliſtan on the weſt. It conſiſted, according to the account of Abul Fazel, of one hundred and five provinces, and two thouſand ſeven hundred diſtricts: a vaſt territory comprehending the fineſt and richeſt countries in the peninſula. For the more convenient adminiſtration of the government of this vaſt empire, Acber divided his dominions into fifteen Subahs, over each of which he appointed a Subadar or viceroy, with various ſubordinate officers. The names of theſe Subahs were Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Oude, Agimer, Ahmedabad, Bahar, Bengal, Cabul, Lahore, Multan, Muterah, Berar, Candeiſh, and Ahmedgnagur. According to the accurate detail of this ſubject, given in the Aſiatic Regiſter, the empire thus divided was governed nearly on the ſame principles as the ancient Hindu ſtates. The Emperor, however, ruled with a more abſolute ſway than the ancient Rajahs, who were cramped by the interference of an arbitrary ſyſtem of religion, interwoven with the civil code; and by a domineering hierarchy, which in that code is placed above the prince in the order of ſociety, and which operated with a commanding influence upon both the opinions and the actions of the ſovereign.

Both as a warrior and a ſtateſman, Acber poſſeſſed ſingular merit. As he enlarged his dominions beyond the limits tranſmitted to him by his anceſtors, it

it was alſo his glory to govern them by a ſtricter regard to juſtice than the precedents which they had left him. What peculiarly diſtinguiſhed him above every Mahommedan prince is the liberality of his religious ſentiments, and the unlimited toleration which he allowed to every claſs of his ſubjects. Both the prince and his miniſter diſplay an enlargement of mind on this ſubject far beyond what we ſhould expect from the adherents of the Mahommedan faith; and a liberality in his treatment of Schiſmatics, which at the ſame period no European monarch ſeems to have poſſeſſed.

"In the dominions which he conquered, as well as thoſe which he held by hereditary right, he not only reſtored the Hindoos to the free exerciſe of their religion, but alſo to many of their civil rights *.

"In the ancient Hindu ſtate, it would appear from every document, that the prince was the abſolute and ſole proprietor of the ſoil; that the land throughout his dominions was apportioned in ſmall allotments to the huſbandmen, by whom it was cultivated upon the tenure of a perpetual hereditary leaſe; that the groſs produce of the ſoil conſtituted the revenue of the ſtate, and that one ſixth part only of that produce, with ſome variations, had from cuſtom immemorial been demanded by the prince."

Of

* Vide Aſiatic Reg. vol. 3d. p. 2.

Of this groſs produce, part was paid in kind, and part in money. The ſtate of landed property in Hindoſtan continued nearly the ſame for the firſt three centuries after the Mahommedan conqueſts.

THE rude and ferocious fanatics of the Ghiznian race, rather over-ran, than ſubdued the weſtern provinces. With the ſhort-ſighted avarice of barbarians, they preferred the immediate plunder of moveable property, to the more permanent advantage to be derived from a well protected huſbandry. They were ſucceeded by the Afghan dynaſty, characterized in general by the ſame qualities; and though their power was better eſtabliſhed, and more permanent, they eſtabliſhed no defined mode of payment, or ſettled ſyſtem of contribution. If the Ryut was not driven into the woods by actual violence, he pined under the moſt rigorous exactions, which ſeemed to have no limits but his ability to pay. During the earlier reigns of the Mahommedan princes, very ſcanty details are afforded by their hiſtorians of the ordinary meaſures of internal adminiſtration. When the horror of the ſcene becomes deepened by the devaſtations of ſome new conqueror, they are more circumſtantial than in the common routine of vulgar oppreſſions; and it may upon the whole be aſſerted of the beſt of theſe princes, that whilſt the treaſury was kept tolerably full, they were little anxious about the ſources from which it was ſupplied.

On the acceſſion of Acber, a ſyſtem of moderation was immediately adopted; all arbitrary impoſitions under the name of Jehaat, and Sayer Jehaat, were aboliſhed; though theſe, we are informed by his hiſtorian, had in ſome reigns equalled the whole quit-rent of the empire. All merchandize, with a few exceptions, were permitted to paſs free of duty; and the practice of forcibly recruiting the army from the Hindoo labourers was diſcontinued. Theſe regulations, which were of themſelves ſufficient to alter the whole conſtitution of government, were followed up by a variety of others in the ſame ſpirit, which have diſtinguiſhed the reign of this monarch with a high, but juſt reputation.

In the complicated buſineſs of the aſſeſſment of revenue, this prince availed himſelf of the talents of Rajah Tudor Mull, a Hindoo, diſtinguiſhed throughout Hindoſtan for his financial abilities. Abul Fazel, a ſtateſman no leſs eminent in political ſagacity, was raiſed to the management of the civil government; and the various reforms which he effected in every branch of affairs, give at once an high idea of his talents, and of the prudent choice of the monarch. The inſtitutions of Acber eſtabliſhed in every province of the empire a ſyſtematic order and regularity, not only in executing the affairs of government, but in the adminiſtration of juſtice.

The Subadar, or viceroy, was the immediate repreſentative of the Emperor; and along with the

Sunnud, or order for his appointment, he received a written code of inſtructions, the injunctions of which, ſuch as that forbidding to ſwear, or uſe foul language, though apparently minute and ridiculous, muſt have had nevertheleſs much influence in ſtimulating his induſtry, and preſerving his fidelity in the diſcharge of his duty: the welfare of the people is held out as the great end of all his endeavours, and the only foundation of the happineſs of the ſtate. Under the viceroy, the Foujdar poſſeſſes juriſdiction over ſeveral diſtricts: he is conſidered as an executive officer, who carries into effect the orders of the Subah. His duty is to protect the huſbandmen, and puniſh rebellious or refractory zemindars.

THE judges of Mahommedan courts were the Cazy and the Meer Adul; the firſt tried cauſes, and the other paſſed ſentence. All cauſes whether civil or criminal were ſubmitted to their cognizance, when the parties were Mahommedans; but in litigations between Hindoos only, the deciſion was left to two Pundits, who tried and determined each caſe according to the ordinances of the Hindoo code.

EACH province, city, and even each quarter of the ſame city, was put under the inſpection of a police officer, named a Cutwal. This officer was appointed by the Emperor, and was reſponſible to deliver up

* Ayeen Acbery, vol. p. 368.

up to juſtice every perſon who ſhould be guilty of an illegal act within his juriſdiction. When any theft was committed, the police officer was anſwerable for the value of the ſtolen goods, if he did not ſucceed in apprehending the delinquent. The inhabitants themſelves ſeem alſo to have been liable, when any robbery was committed, if they did not diſcover to the Cutwal, or ſecure the offender. By theſe regulations the police was ſo vigorouſly enforced that travellers might paſs through the country in perfect ſafety by night as well as by day. We have the teſtimony of both Bernier and Tavernier with regard to the ſecurity of perſons and property, that aroſe from the peculiar vigilance of the police during ſucceeding reigns, when theſe regulations ſtill ſubſiſted: the former of theſe gentlemen has performed in various parts of India more extenſive journies than any individual.

The inhabitants of every houſe, in each town, were regiſtered by the police-man; the ſtreets, lanes, and public roads were ſuperintended by his officers. During night, the peace was preſerved by armed patroles, ſome of infantry, and others of cavalry. To ſecure the diligence of the Cutwal, and to prevent his colluſion with diſorderly perſons, his whole conduct was watched by two ſpies altogether unknown to him, who wrote to court every month a particular account of every occurrence.

By

By this vaſt eſtabliſhment of police officers, tranquillity was not only ſecured, but a ſort of moral diſcipline was eſtabliſhed, which ſeemed not unfavourable to the virtuous habits of the people; though it muſt have been altogether incompatible either with perſonal or civil freedom. Under the protection which it afforded the people; and from the ſecurity of property which it effected, the induſtry of the Hindoos was ſtimulated to ſome degree of activity; and agriculture, manufactures, and internal commerce aroſe to a degree of proſperity equal, perhaps, to what they enjoyed under the ancient princes of their own race.

The contributions to the ſtate being raiſed with mildneſs and equity, were borne with great eaſe and cheerfulneſs by the peaſant, though they roſe to an amount that far exceeded whatever had been raiſed in any former period. Towards the end of Acber's reign, when the ſalutary effects of his regulations had time to operate, the taxes amounted annually to thirty-ſix millions ſterling. In a country, and at a period when money was perhaps ten times the value it bears in Britain, this conſtituted no doubt a large ſum; eſpecially ſince drawn almoſt wholly from the immediate produce of land. The few taxes paid by manufactures and merchandize, were of little conſideration in the amount. Vaſt as this ſum may appear, it did not amount to one fourth of the produce of the lands, according to the aſſeſſment made out by Tuder Mull: and though it does not ſeem to have

comprehended the proviſion for the poor, the bounties to learned men, nor the penſions given to decayed families, yet we are at a loſs to conceive how it ſupported that immenſe eſtabliſhment civil and military, which was upheld by the Mogul Princes. The Zemindary troops, a ſort of militia which was maintained excluſively in each province for the purpoſe of collecting the revenues, and enforcing the police, amounted, we are aſſured, to no fewer than four millions of men, infantry and cavalry. If to this number we add the regular army, which conſiſted of eight hundred thouſand men, we ſhall find a very ſmall allowance to each ſoldier; even though we put out of the eſtimate all the expences of the court, and the ſuperior officers in all the departments of the ſtate. Either the Sebundy troops muſt have ſerved with little or no pay, for a certain part of the year only; or the author of the Ayeen Acbery muſt have committed ſome palpable miſtake. The lands allotted for penſions to meritorious officers, and proviſion for the poor, are termed Jagheer, and Seyurghal, and are not enumerated in the ordinary revenues of the crown. The laſt were immenſe in value, and committed to the diſpoſal of the Suddar, or high almoner; an office, highly important, but of a nature ſo diſcretionary, that the faithful diſcharge of it was frequently found to be a taſk beyond the reach of human virtue. Abul Fazel, the author of Ayeen Acbery, after the diſgrace of ſeveral great perſonages, had the ſuperintendance of this department committed to him by the Emperor, whoſe confidence he

ſeems

ſeems to have ſhared as completely as the great Sully did that of his maſter.

THE collection of the revenues was conducted by a numerous body of officers, whoſe fidelity was attempted to be ſecured by various checks and controls: the principle of theſe checks ſeems to have been a mixture of Muſſulman and Hindoo officers; of the firſt claſs was the Aumil, an officer appointed annually by the Subahdar; under him, of the ſame religious faith, was the Tepukehy, the Zemindar Conengoe, and Karkun, were Hindoos in correſponding ſituations, as a control upon the firſt; but the moſt complete contrivance for this purpoſe, was the appointment of two Wakyatnavees, or news writers, who ſeem to have been unknown, or at leaſt totally independent of all the reſt, and who tranſmitted daily to the preſence, by poſt, an account of every occurrence.

IN the appointment of the Hindoo officers of revenue, and particularly of the Zemindar, there was a peculiarity which has occaſioned much diſcuſſion in the Engliſh ſyſtem of finance. This office, according to the Hindoo law, had been hereditary; and in the Sunnud, or written appointment from the king, the office of collector is conferred as an inheritance, on the ſpecial condition of executing the truſt with fidelity. Along with their appointment, theſe officers received a certain portion of land termed Nanker, as a part of their official allowance, and

and of which they were inveſted in the abſolute proprietary right, by the ſame tenure, that they held their office. Theſe portions of land allotted to the Zemindar, being intended merely as a proviſion for his family, were ſmall; and their productive value was deduced from his pay, which was ten per cent. upon the rents which he collected for government.

THE office of Zemindar ſeems to have been partly executive, and partly judicial; his buſineſs on the part of government was ſpecified in the Sunnud of his appointment: it conſiſted in realiſing the rent agreed upon for his diſtrict; in protecting the Ryut from injuſtice; and in puniſhing, by fine or chaſtiſement, ſuch as were criminal or refractory: and though the terms of his appointment conferred hereditary right; yet it was cuſtomary for government to diſmiſs Zemindars from their ſituation, and to deprive them of their Nankeer lands, on their being convicted of fraudulent and corrupt practices, or even of culpable negligence in the diſcharge of their duty. Their ſituation, therefore, bears little reſemblance, but in name, to the landholder in more free countries, where the ſovereign does not act as the maſter of his ſubjects, or as proprietor of the ſoil.

ALL the orders of government, regarding the Ryuts, were delivered to them by the Zemindar; before him likewiſe all their grievances and complaints were preferred: he was the oſtenſible agent of the ſovereign, in whatever related to the revenues of the ſtate,

ſtate, and to the rural economy of the country. But the prudent Acber deemed it unſafe to confide entirely to Hindoos in matters of ſuch extenſive importance; he appointed, therefore, a Mahommedan Aumil and a Putchy to each diſtrict of the country to aſſiſt in the collection of the revenues, and to be a check on the conduct of the Zemindars.

THE inſtitutes of Menu, tranſlated by Sir William Jones, and the digeſt of Hindoo law tranſlated by Mr Colebrook, have at laſt ſettled beyond controverſy the long agitated queſtion regarding the property of the ſoil. It appears now indiſputable, that the proprietary right of the ſoil was veſted in the King, both by the Hindoo and Muſſulman ſyſtem of government; that the actual cultivators of the land, held their ſmall farms immediately from the King, by perpetual hereditary leaſes, on the ſpecific condition of paying, at ſtated times, a certain proportion of the annual produce of their lands; and that between the prince and the huſbandman there was no intermediate proprietors whatever, and that the Zemindars, who have been ſuppoſed proprietors, were only hereditary ſervants of the prince, appointed for ſpecific purpoſes.

SUCH is the brief ſtatement of the civil inſtitutions of Acber; this military eſtabliſhment was equally extenſive. Beſides thoſe irregular troops, commanded by the Aumil, the Cutwall and Zemindar in each diſtrict, and which were upwards of four millions, the

the regular army, which conſiſted of Muſſulmans, amounted to above eight hundred thouſand men. The former ſerved only in their particular diſtricts, for the purpoſes of police or revenue, the latter ſerved to oppoſe the enemies of the ſtate, on whatever quarter they might invade it.

THE imperial army was divided into 440 munſubs or battalions, of unequal numbers, but each proportioned to the rank of the commander, called a munſubdar. Each of theſe munſubs conſiſts of two-thirds cavalry, and one-third infantry; and the three larger were commanded by the Emperor's ſons. The firſt contained ten, the ſecond eight, and the third ſeven thouſand cavalry, having each a third of that number of infantry attached to it. The cavalry were armed with with long cutlaſſes; the infantry with bows and arrows; one third only having muſkets, or more properly matchlocks, which they denominate bundocks.

A PROPORTIONATE number of artillery was attached to each munſub, together with a requiſite allowance of elephants, horſes, camels, and carts for their baggage. The royal palace, and perſon of the Emperor, were guarded by a choſen body of men, in addition to the regular army: to which alſo were added, as occaſion might require, 100,000 gladiators (ſhemſheerbaz), conſiſting of ten different corps, armed differently with ſhields and cudgels, or with daggers and poignards. The whole of this army was formed into

into 12 grand diviſions, which did duty month after month alternately during the time of peace; and officers of every rank were obliged to attend to their ſtated routine of duty.

IRREGULARITY in furniſhing their pay has ever proved the grand defect in all Aſiatic armies. The diſcontents and open mutinies ariſing from this cauſe, have often rendered the military more dangerous to their employers than to their enemies. Here the diſcernment of Acber ſhone conſpicuous: for on the firſt day of every month the proper officers were furniſhed with the means, and directed to iſſue their pay to the troops—This varied not only among the officers, but the private ſoldiers, according to the corps in which they ſerved. The allowance of a munſubdar, varied from 60,000 to one thouſand rupees per month, according to the number of their corps: that of the foot ſoldier from ten to thirty rupees; while the allowance of a trooper roſe from twelve to ninety. The omrahs, who commanded the grand diviſions of the army, and whoſe duty correſponded with that of general officers in European armies, had very frequently aſſignments of certain portions of land allowed them for pay. Theſe were held during life or perpetuity, on condition of performing military ſervice, and ſupporting a certain number of troops, ready for actual ſervice or any emergency. The captains had ſimilar conſignments made over to them; but, in all caſes, it was provided, that the holders of theſe Jaghiers, ſhould make no alteration in the leaſes

ſes of the Ryots, by requiring greater exactions than had been paid to government.

"SUCH was the manner in which a great army was conſtructed and paid," ſays a judicious writer, "by one of the ableſt and moſt accompliſhed princes that ever adorned the annals of Aſia. Yet the very formation of this vaſt multitude of armed men, is at variance with every principle of military ſcience, order, and diſcipline; and is of itſelf ſufficient to ſhow, that Acber, with all his talents, very little ſurpaſſed the reſt of his countrymen, in his ideas of military affairs.—Twice the number of cavalry to that of infantry; ſo great diſproportion in the number of men of which the different corps was compoſed; ſuch a wide difference between the pay of officers of the ſame rank, are defects of ſuch magnitude in the organization of an army, as muſt neceſſarily have prevented its ever attaining any degree of ſyſtematic diſcipline, or performing the common evolutions with preciſion and effect. Yet ſuch was the general ignorance of Aſiatics in military ſcience, that this cumbrous army, which, oppoſed to a body of 30,000 Europeans, muſt have been defeated by its own radical defects, nevertheleſs kept all the ſurrounding nations in complete awe."

UNWARLIKE as the ſurrounding nations were, the inefficiency of the imperial troops, was often ſtrikingly exemplified in their conteſts with the ſubordinate powers of the peninſula. The four Muſſulman princes

princes in the Deccan, namely that Golconda, Bijipoor, Colberga, and Telingâh were not ſubdued during the whole of this reign: the two firſt remained independent when Tavernier viſited India in the time of Jehanguire: and though the imperial policy was continually bent upon their ſubjugation, there was no period, even in their moſt proſperous reigns, in which the imperial arms obtained the complete dominion of the peninſula. The numerous armies, and the immenſe treaſures of the ſtate, though guided by the ſuperior wiſdom of Acber, were continually waſted in ſubduing the rebellions, or in combating the independent members of this community of nations. A number of ſmall Hindoo ſtates ſtill retained their independence; and although they had but little direct influence on the politics of Hindoſtan, yet, by combining with the Muſſulman princes of the Deccan, they prevented the preponderating power of Delhi from gaining a complete aſcendant over them. When the Mahratta tribes, originally a paſtoral people on the mountains of Berar, afterwards coaleſced into a nation; they made continual predatory eruptions into the adjacent provinces of the empire; and though frequently driven back, they were never wholly ſubdued. In a word, the whole military eſtabliſhments of the Mogul empire, though increaſed to the incredible amount of near five millions of men, were not ſo efficient either in maintaining internal peace or proſecuting war, as the more energetic ſyſtem adopted by the Britiſh Eaſt India Company, though

it does not withdraw from the induſtry of the country one-fortieth part of the number of hands.

THE expenditure of thirty-ſix millions, in the pay of officers and troops of every deſcription, as no part of this vaſt ſum was carried out of the country, implies a powerful demand for manufactures, and a ſtrong ſtimulus to induſtry: yet the export trade of Hindoſtan was, probably, not equal to what it is at preſent. The loſs of inhabitants, and the deſtruction of property, occaſioned by the diſtractions, and final diſſolution of the Mogul government, muſt have materially injured the proſperity of the country. The Britiſh provinces of Bengal, and Bahar, ſuffered for many years largely by theſe diſtractions, yet their revenues, even in their diminiſhed ſtate, will not be diſgraced by a compariſon of their preſent products, with that which they yielded under the celebrated adminiſtration of Acber.*

THE Subah of Bahar, according to the Ayeen Acbery, was rated annually in the books of the Exchequer at five millions five hundred and forty-ſeven thouſand rupees, at a reaſonable exchange, equal to 554,700l. It contributed at the ſame time above half a million of troops—In the ſame volume Bengal ſtands aſſeſſed at 14,961,482 rupees, or one million and a half Sterling, while it contributed 824,000 ſoldiers,

* Ayeen Acbery, vol. 2d. p. 19.

diers, and upwards of 4000 cannons, and as many boats.

On looking into the India budget for 1797, we find the revenue of the Bengal provinces, which correſpond with theſe ſubahs in the Ayeen Acbery, ſtated at above ſix hundred millions Sterling.—Here is a revenue of nearly three times the amount of that obtained by the immortal Acber, from provinces that had been ravaged by Mahrattas for twenty years before they fell into our poſſeſſion, and in a manner which the old inhabitants ſtill deſcribe with horror. Nor can the preſent impoſt be regarded as more, or even equally as oppreſſive with the other, ſince the enormous requiſition of a million and a half of troops, boats, and artillery is not exacted from the inhabitants.

From this ſimple ſtatement of facts, it will appear with what juſtice ſome declaimers hold up the grandeur, power, and proſperity of the Mogul government, compared to the preſent ſtate of the Britiſh provinces in India. The complaiſance may be pardoned in Abul Fazel, writing under the eye of a deſpotic prince, whom he dreaded, and whom he probably brought himſelf to believe to be endowed with preternatural powers, ſince he confidently aſſerts, that he was gifted with inſpiration; but from what bias modern writers are led to aſcribe every advantage to paſt, and every evil to the preſent ſyſtem, and the preſent times it is not ſo eaſy to conjecture, as it is to prove

prove, that their repreſentations are altogether unfounded in truth. The vaſt, unwieldy, and expenſive machinery of the Mogul government is proved by the concurring teſtimony of hiſtory to have been very inefficient in promoting either the peace or proſperity of the people: bad, however, as it was, had the European ſyſtem immediately ſucceeded it, the advantage to the country muſt have been immenſe. Eſtabliſhed as the latter has been, upon the ſcattered fragments of ſociety, and the mere wreck of empire, it appears aſtoniſhing to contemplate ſo ſpeedy a renovation as that which it has effected; and to behold a new fabric of human *aſſociation* riſing from the ruins of the old, of a more ſeemly and convenient ſtructure, as well as of more durable materials.

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Chunar, 1798.

BEFORE I left Europe, I freely own that I entertained the ſame erroneous notion regarding the influence of the Britiſh government on the peace and ſecurity of the natives of Aſia, which were then prevalent in England. The idea of foreigners making ſuch vaſt and rapid conqueſts in a diſtant country, was in my mind cloſely allied with much miſery, rapine and oppreſſion, exerciſed againſt the unwarlike and paſſive Hindoos. The forcible poſſeſſion of a country which by immemorial preſcription, the beſt of all rights, was their own; with me I confeſs militated againſt the very firſt principles of juſtice. It was only by the irreſiſtible evidence of a thouſand facts, and daily obſervation that I have been forced to abandon thoſe opinions which were cheriſhed not merely as virtuous, but a part of myſelf. I am fully convinced

vinced that the conqueſt of Aſia by Europeans, has not been a ſevere diſpenſation, but a grand and uſeful remedy for the innumerable evils which they ſuffered.

Upon your mind I have little hope of producing the ſame conviction: The Barbary ſtates however, Egypt and the whole Turkiſh empire, have long remained in ſuch a ſtate of barbarous anarchy, that even an Engliſhman could believe they might be benefited by a conqueſt. After what I have witneſſed, I have no difficulty in admitting that the government of the moſt unprincipled nation in Europe, would produce a deſirable amelioration of its condition.

The Mogul government at no period offered full ſecurity to the prince, ſtill leſs to his vaſſals; and to peaſants the moſt ſcanty protection of all. It was a continued tiſſue of violence and inſurrection, treachery and puniſhment, under which neither commerce nor the arts could proſper, nor agriculture aſſume the appearance of a ſyſtem: Its downfall gave riſe to a ſtate ſtill more afflictive, ſince anarchy is worſe than miſrule. The Mahommedan government, wretched as it was, the European nations have not the merit of overturning It fell beneath the weight of its own corruption, and had already been ſucceeded by the multifarious tyranny of petty chiefs, whoſe right to govern conſiſted in their treaſon to the ſtate, and whoſe exactions on the peaſants were as boundleſs as their avarice. The rents to government were, and where natives rule, ſtill are levied twice a year, by a mercileſs

mercileſs banditti, under the ſemblance of an army, who wantonly deſtroy or carry off whatever part of the produce may ſatisfy their caprice, or ſatiate their avidity, after having hunted the-ill fated peaſants from the villages to the woods. Any attempt of the peaſants to defend their perſons or property within the mud walls of their villages, only calls for the more ſignal vengeance on thoſe uſeful, but ill fated mortals. They are then ſurrounded and attacked with muſketry and field-pieces till reſiſtance ceaſes, when the ſurvivors are ſold, and their habitations burnt and levelled with the ground. Hence you will frequently meet with the ryuts gathering up the ſcattered remnants of what had yeſterday been their habitation, if fear has permitted them to return; but oftener the ruins are ſeen ſmoking, after a ſecond viſitation of this kind; without the appearance of a human being to interrupt the awful ſilence of deſolation.

This deſcription does not apply to the Mahommedan chieftains alone; it is equally applicable to the Rajahs in the diſtricts governed by Hindoos. Theſe two races of men, however diſtinct they continue in certain modes and obſervances, are very much aſſimilated in barbarity, and in ignorance of the art of government: Their neighbourhood, occaſions a perpetual intercourſe of war or contention, which ſtrengthens every malevolent principle to a degree, incompatible either with peace or improvement. This is the more to be regretted, as the Hindoos are regaining the ſovereignty of their ancient poſſeſſions. At preſent

preſent the Mahratta people extend their ſway in one form or another, from the bay of Bengal, to the river Indus. The degraded Hindoo ſovereign is reinſtated in the Myſore, ſo that this antient people have recovered more than one half of India. Throughout the whole of this immenſe diſtrict, agriculture is in a very imperfect ſtate, and in that ſtate it muſt continue from the oppreſſions of petty tyrants in their own diſtricts, or the external evils occaſioned by the wars of contending chieftains.

THE following obſervations ſelected from an account of this people by Willam H. Tone, commander of a regiment in the ſervice of the Peſhwah, are entitled to be regarded as the moſt authentic that have yet been communicated on this ſubject. From a long reſidence in the country, and a minute perſonal obſervation of their manners, this gentleman has enjoyed very ſuperior advantages in elucidating this ſubject.

"I know not under what preciſe head to arrange the form of the Mahratta government. It is not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, a complete monarchy: they have no titled nobility; of conſequence it does not come under the definition of an ariſtocracy: the people have no weight; it is therefore no democracy. It would perhaps be beſt deſcribed, by reſembling it to the circles of Germany, as a military republic, compoſed of chiefs independent of each other; acknowledging as their ſupreme head, the Peſhwah, who is himſelf the

the ſuppoſed miniſter of the Sattarah Rajah. Their ſubmiſſion, however, is in many particulars merely nominal. The unfortunate deſcendant of Sevajee, though leſs than a cypher, has ſome occaſional attentions paid to him. No Peſhwa can be appointed without receiving the kelat of inveſtiture from his hands. Whenever the Peſhwa takes the field in perſon, he muſt previouſly receive an audience of leave from the Rajah. The country circumjacent to Sattarah, enjoys an exemption from military depredations of all kinds; and whenever any chief enters this diſtrict, all enſigns of royalty are laid aſide; and the *nagara*, or great drum of the empire ceaſes to beat. Theſe, I believe, are the only marks of attention paid to the nominal head of this powerful government; in other particulars, he is a cloſe priſoner on a very moderate allowance. The preſent Rajah was ſome few years back, a private filladar, or commandant of horſe; but being unfortunately of the blood of Sevajee, on the demiſe of his predeceſſor, he was exalted from a ſtate of happy obſcurity, to the ſplendid miſery of a throne and a priſon.

Every thing reſpecting this extraordinary people, becomes an object of curioſity, as they appear a kind of phenomenon in the world of oriental politics. Their principles of government excite our attention, as they diſcover a mode of thinking and acting, totally differing from the regular ſyſtem of European policy. The very local arrangements of empire are peculiar; the territory of the different chiefs being

blended or interſperſed with each other. Part of the Peſhwa's dominions lie on the ſea coaſt, and part on the northward of Delhi. It is alſo no uncommon thing for a pergunnah, ſometimes a ſingle town, to belong to two or three different chiefs: ſome are even the joint property of the Peſhwa and the Nizam. A diſpoſition ſo chequered, ſtrikes me as having a tendency to weaken the combined ſtrength of the whole; but whether this be the effect of policy or accident, I confeſs I cannot determine.

The Peſhwa, though the acknowledged head of the empire, has but very little territory in his own hands: the Soubadarry of Amedabad, worth about ſixty lacks a year, is the largeſt diſtrict he poſſeſſes. Some of the great perſonages of the Poonah Sircar hold jagheers from the ſtate by right of office, which being independent of the Peſhwa, are very valuable. That lately held by Purſeram Bow, was worth thirty lacks annually. Ruſtia Foncia, or as he is termed the Tope Koonah Walla, an officer correſponding to our maſter-general of ordinance, Firkia and many others, have very conſiderable revenues; but the mere landed income in the hands of the Peſhwa, is very trifling: His reſources depend upon the contributions of the other members of the empire, which every thing included, do not exceed four crore of rupees a year.

In the great durbar of Poonah, all the higher offices are hereditary. The *Dewan**, *Furnaveſe*, *Chitnaveſe*

* Miniſter. † Chancellor.

Chitnaveſe ‡, and even the commander in chief or holder of the jerry put § are all ſituations held by deſcent; and ſo much is this rule adhered to, that no peſhwa has ever preſumed to invade it. The cuſtom, however, does not obtain in the inferior durbars.

It is one peculiar feature of the Mahratta government, that the empire always conſiders itſelf as in a ſtate of war. This circumſtance entirely reſults from the unſettled and fluctuating ſtate of the internal government: their recent acquiſitions in Hindoſtan are held only by the ſword; and they are under the neceſſity of compelling the payment of the Chout, always given with reluctance, or extorted by actual force. But, independent of theſe motives, war is with them a ſource of revenue; as the different chiefs of the empire make annual campaigns in the few diſtricts which have not yet been brought to a ſtate of ſubjection, or actual ſervitude. Theſe military excurſions are termed Muluk-gheré, two Perſian words, which ſignify taking poſſeſſion of territory.

This eternal warfare is the cauſe of an enormous expence; to ſupply which the Mahrattas have many modes of finance; but the moſt prevailing one is that of anticipating their revenues. It is unneceſſary to enlarge on the defects of a ſyſtem ſo obviouſly

‡ Maſter of requeſts. § A ſmall ſtandard made of gold cloth.

viouſly pernicious. Theſe mortgages upon the territorial revenue are negociated by wealthy Soucars, between whom and the miniſter there always exiſts a proper underſtanding; they are frequently at a diſcount of thirty or forty per cent. and then paid in the moſt depreciated currency. This ruinous method of raiſing the ſupplies, ariſes from the unſettled ſtate of the country, which induces government to prefer a certain ſum in hand, though at an enormous uſury, to the poſſible receipt of a precarious revenue at the expiration of three or four years, to which extent they are frequently anticipated. In ſuch diſtricts as remain in the management of the Sircar, the taxes are raiſed according to the uſages of the higheſt antiquity, and are generally very moderate. The duties on common commodities, on a groſs eſtimate, never exceed five per cent. except on Ghee, which amount to fifty. The revenue reſulting from the proprietary right to the ſoil, which is one half of the produce; the Chout paid by the Nizam, and the plunder raiſed by Moulukgheré, form the grand pecuniary reſources of the Mahratta empire. Theſe, though amounting to a vaſt ſum, are far ſhort of the current expences. The conquered country in Hindoſtan, exhauſted by continual depredations, is no longer capable to furniſh a ſingle rupee. The entire wealth of this once rich country, is buried in the private treaſuries of the Mahratta chiefs, and loſt to all the purpoſes of circulation. So great is the ſcarcity of ſpecie in the upper provinces, that for theſe two years paſt, Scindia has been obliged to extort

tort money from the Poonah government for the payment of his vaſt armies in Hindoſtan.

In the different governments of the native powers, as in the moſt deſpotic ones, the prince unleſs he poſſeſſes great talents, is merely a cypher; the Dewan, or miniſter, has all authority in his hands. This office is univerſally beſtowed on the perſon who gives the greateſt nuzzur, or more properly ſpeaking, can furniſh a ſum to anſwer ſome particular exigence of the ſtate: for an inability to ſupply money for current expences, is always ſure to diſplace a miniſter. The prince having taken the bribe, often amounting to many lacks of rupees, the object of the purchaſer is to reimburſe himſelf. Here the great door to corruption is thrown open: every office is ſet up to auction, and knocked down to the higheſt bidder, without regarding any qualification but the price. Every ſituation, Komiſdars, Killadars, and places, are diſpoſed of in public market. No check can be given to conſequential peculation. He that ſhould puniſh the delinquent, has himſelf ſet the example, and is equally implicated in his guilt. The very man that has bought his office is not certain of holding it a year; this conſideration gives additional keenneſs to his avarice, till it gets whetted to the higheſt degree, and he extorts from the unfortunate Ryut the product of his labour, without compunction. Thus he plunders without mercy the very ſubject it is his duty to protect. If this tyrant be removed, the evil is by no means removed with him; for

for his ſucceſſor, if he buys his office, (and on no other terms will he get it), will moſt certainly be equally rapacious and unprincipled.

IT is from cauſes of this kind, that the bulk of the people are almoſt without property. Few under a Mahratta government have any opportunity of acquiring wealth, except the powerful Brahmins, who hold offices in the Durbar. Their avarice is inſatiable; and if ever the madneſs of accumulation was marked with the higheſt degree of folly, it is in the preſent inſtance: for although the Brahmin may be permitted to go on even for years in every practice of extortion, his wealth at laſt excites the attention of the prince, when he is obliged to diſgorge, and is perhaps ordered to a Kella for life. If he happens to die while in office, his property is generally ſequeſtrated by the Sircar. In this caſe his family is provided for either by a penſion, or otherwiſe; and the cuſtom of plunder, which is called Goonogeré *, forms one very conſiderable part of the contingent revenue.

UPON the whole, I believe, there is not upon record an example of any government ſo little calculated to give protection to the ſubject, as the fluctuating and unſteady ſyſtem of the Mahrattas: an adminiſtration formed of rapacity, corruption, and inſta-

* Compound epithet, ſignifying *crime penalty*.

inſtability, affords but little hope of domeſtic happineſs, or public ſecurity. To this grand ſource may be aſcribed the accumulated miſery of the people; oppreſſion, poverty, and famine, which laſt appears the appropriated curſe of this country. When we reflect on the great fertility of Hindoſtan in general, it is amazing to conſider the frequency of this dreadful viſitation. It is evidently not owing to any ſterility in the ſoil or climate, ſince there are many ſeaſons that yield two or three crops; the evil muſt be traced to ſome political cauſe; and it requires but little penetration to diſcover it in the avarice and extortion of the various governments. In a country ſuch as this, where revolutions are ſo common, the great ſpur to induſtry, that of ſecurity, is taken away: the Ryut, who cultivates his ground this year, is by no means ſure of poſſeſſing it the next: if he ſhould, it is highly probable that under a government that holds its ſway only by the ſword, ſome large detachment may be quartered in his neighbourhood: no greater blow can be given to induſtry; for a Mahratta army is more indefatigably deſtructive than myriads of locuſts. The property of friends and enemies falls equally a prey to their undiſtinguiſhing depredations. Hence no man raiſes more grain than is barely ſufficient for himſelf; and the produce of the year is juſt equivalent to its conſumption. The conſequence is, as there are no public granaries, that the firſt unfavourable ſeaſon produces a famine: the inhabitants abandon their fields, and either fly to the coaſt, or to ſome other place, where

where the famine has prevailed leſs. This new acceſſion of people produces a famine there alſo, and the evil becomes univerſal.

It is at this period, that the traveller beholds the greateſt of all human miſeries; hunger, nakedneſs, and diſeaſe, and death, which in this caſe is the extreme of mercy. He ſees the ſtreets ſtrewed with carcaſes; the highways with ſkeletons; and every countenance proclaiming miſery, wretchedneſs, and deſpair It is owing to the frequency of this dreadful calamity, that the Mahrattas are total ſtrangers to charity, and poſſeſs an inſenſibility of heart, to which other nations are ſtrangers. The feelings become ſteeled with a repetition of diſtreſs, eſpecially in a people whoſe ruling paſſion is avarice. A Mahratta will ſee his own brother expire before him with the moſt phlegmatic compoſure. Perhaps the man who has beheld his whole family die around him, without exciting one ſentiment of compaſſion in his fellow-beings, will, when the evil again recurs, find his heart hardened againſt mankind from a recollection of their barbarity, rather than ſoftened to pity by a knowledge of their diſtreſs. Such is the effect of famine upon morals; but I believe it has never produced one inſurrection againſt the government, which, for the moſt part, occaſions it. The Hindoo has but few paſſions; he conſiders misfortune as his fate; and he ſubmits without a ſtruggle.

It

It is alſo owing to famine, and its concomitant depopulations, that ſome parts of India are ſo thinly inhabited. I believe it may be ſafely aſſerted, that through the whole country (Bengal and Behar excepted) one acre in fifty is not cultivated; and the quantity of tilled land will always bear a proportion to the number of people to be maintained by it. It is no uncommon circumſtance for large cities, in the time of famine, to loſe three fourths of their inhabitants; and the country ſuffers in the ſame degree. Frequently whole diſtricts are ſwept away, and for years remain a jungle, notwithſtanding the climate is ſo favourable to population. Upon the whole, between the indolence of the people, and the rapacity of the government, famine appears to be the prime curſe of this country; yet, incredible as it may ſeem, no proviſions are ever made againſt it; but that the fault is not in nature, or the natives, may be ſeen by turning to Bengal, which, enjoying a more ſteady adminiſtration, has not ſuffered famine, I believe, ſince that which happened in 1770, or 1771, twenty-ſix years ago; although every other part of India has been frequently viſited by it ſince that period.

Such is the comparative ſtate of the Britiſh provinces, and the reſt of India, drawn by a diſintereſted ſpectator, and I have often had occaſion to witneſs its accuracy and truth. Upon what principle then does the Abbe Reynal, and after him other ignorant declaimers, give out that the Engliſh have

robbed the natives of their poſſeſſions, and diſtreſſed them by their cruelties? The Britiſh territories are, in truth, the only part of the country which they peaceably poſſeſs; the only aſylum where they, at this hour, enjoy in any competent degree either protection, plenty, or comfort. Among a people ſo long accuſtomed to anarchy or miſrule, it would be too ſanguine to expect that habits of induſtry or ſubmiſſion to order can be ſpeedily eſtabliſhed; yet that the extenſion of European dominion over this vaſt country, above deſcribed, has proved a great bleſſing, is a truth as incontrovertible as any in the ſcience of morals. It has already been brought to the teſt of experience; and ſo far as it has yet extended, the truth has obtained all the evidence of demonſtration. When, therefore, you hear of inſtances of miſconduct in our countrymen, and there perhaps have been ſome, they do not overturn the general principle; for aſſuredly a ſyſtem in ſome reſpects bad, may be a great improvement on another which has always been eſſentially and radically worſe.

OF THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

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Near Patna, Nov. 1799.

THE ſecurity of ſo vaſt a territory as the Britiſh empire in India, muſt be regarded as a momentous concern, whether you view the ſubject in regard to external defence, or internal protection. The moſt populous nation in Europe could not perhaps ſupply the continual drain of inhabitants which an army adequate to this purpoſe muſt neceſſarily require. An hundred thouſand troops could not prove ſufficient; and reckoning the life of a ſoldier in India at the average of ten years, this would annually withdraw ten thouſand of the moſt uſeful and enterpriſing part of the community, after it had already ſupplied the unavoidable waſte of a numerous military eſtabliſhment at home. Could ſuch a number of hands be afforded for the ſupply of one branch of the ſervice,

it

it would induce a debility at home, or a depopulation which no foreign dominion could compenſate. It was perhaps the overſtrained exertions of the Portugueze and Spaniſh nations, co-operating with a more than ordinary corruption of manners, that has lowered the power and conſequence of theſe kingdoms in the ſcale of Europe, to a degree which no acquiſition of wealth can retrieve.

HAPPILY for Great Britain, the defence of this country does not neceſſarily require ſuch a proportion of its inhabitants. The natives are themſelves excellent ſoldiers while under the diſcipline and command of European officers: they are not only expert in their exerciſe, but diſtinguiſhed by a cool and ſteady bravery which would do honour to any troops. The revenue of the country will always be adequate to defray the charge of a ſufficient number of native troops, if managed with any economy; and the ſubordination which they have ever ſhewn, is a full ſecurity for their fidelity. The army has on every occaſion been ſubmiſſive to its commanders; the individuals of which it is compoſed have ſacrificed to diſcipline more of their prejudices, than can be found in any other inſtance. Brahmins, and perſons of the higher caſts, are commanded by their inferiors in rank without a murmur upon actual duty. Many inſtances may perhaps be produced in which they have been deprived of part of their ſmall allowances, by the mean artifices of their ſuperiors; but I believe

believe there is hardly a ſingle example of their making a common cauſe to revenge their wrong.

On a late occaſion, a corps of native infantry, upon a miſtaken interpretation of their inclination, was ordered to be embarked as marines, a ſervice not included in the terms of their covenant with the Company, and directly contrary to the prejudices of the greater part of the Hindoos. They refuſed to comply: force was employed; they reſiſted it as far as they were able; but were forced to ſubmit. This tranſaction, while it diſplays their tenacity to their principles, and the terms of their agreement, ſhews alſo their implicit ſubmiſſion, where we have a right to their ſervices. This refractory corps was attacked by another of their own countrymen, and ſoon reduced to ſubmiſſion, by their ſteady behaviour under the direction of European officers.

This tranſaction, however much it may reflect upon the equity of our conduct, affords the fulleſt evidence of the want of a general ſpirit of reſiſtance to Europeans. If our conduct be guided in any meaſure by juſtice or humanity, we can have nothing to apprehend from a general combination of a native army.

There is probably ſtill leſs to dread from a general confederacy of the independent princes of the country againſt us. Their mutual jealouſies and animoſities will for ever defeat ſuch a ſcheme. The advantage

advantage here is all upon our part; for during a late war with Tippoo a more numerous combination was formed by us againſt that prince, than the monarchs of India could ever bring to co operate for the aſſertion of their common independence. The armies of India reſemble thoſe undiſciplined bands which the feudal princes of Europe formerly collected around them. They are compoſed of the dependents of the great lords of court; are retained by them and meet or diſband at their pleaſure, rather than by the orders of the prince. A combination of theſe chiefs may prove formidable to their own ſovereign, but never to a foreign power.

A ſepoy army muſt then prove the chief defence of our poſſeſſions; neither its number nor expence can prove a burden to the inhabitants at large: their pay is ſuperior to the wages of common labour, and more punctually paid; numbers are therefore willing to enliſt, for a limited number of years, during which the frugal native is often enabled to accumulate what, to him, is an independent fortune.

It is from this circumſtance that they ſo frequently aſk leave to retire from the ſervice; a thing more injurious to the ſervice in appearance, than in reality. Their independent and eaſy circumſtances attracts others to ſupply their place; while there is little to be apprehended from their engaging in the army of any hoſtile power. A native ſoldier, after a few months diſuſe, becomes as completely ignorant of

his

his duty, as if he had never learnt it. The reduction of a body of men to mere mechanical motions, in which the excellence of diſcipline has been ſuppoſed to conſiſt, is the work of nature herſelf upon the natives of India. Deprive them of the officer, who may be regarded as the acting ſpring, and they are unable to execute any movement however ſimple: diſcontinue their exerciſe for a ſhort time, and they will reſume it with a conſciouſneſs of their own incapacity; every trial is ineffectual till again they are wound up anew by the labour of freſh inſtruction. The natives are therefore incapable of carrying European diſcipline into a foreign army; as often as the country powers have attempted this, they have procured officers from that ſervice to introduce it.

NATIVE troops are alſo preferable from the ſmall expence of their eſtabliſhment. A battalion of a thouſand men, excluſive of the pay of officers, may be kept up at a ſmaller charge than ſome individual ſervants coſt the Company. Our dominion in India, therefore, will probably prove coeval with our economy and public virtue: ſhould profuſion ſo far increaſe, that a few favourites ſhall engroſs and diſſipate the means of ſupporting our power, it muſt fall like an edifice that has been undermined in its foundation.

FROM the inſubordination or revolt of its native armies, Britain has nothing to fear; from their incapacity

incapacity to repel hoſtile attacks, it has probably ſtill leſs It is to the diſſolute and corrupt habits of its ſervants; or to the treachery of its European troops, that it muſt look for the gradual decay, or the ſudden overthrow of its power in India.

OF

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Calcutta, Dec. 1799.

THE whole of the Hon. Company's civil and military ſervants holding appointments, by the moſt accurate liſts publiſhed, do not amount on this eſtabliſhment to more than two thouſand. This muſt certainly appear a ſmall number of perſons to engroſs with their ſalaries ſo large a ſum as that which conſtitutes the eſtabliſhed charge of this Preſidency.

THE far greater part of the ſervants of the Company however enjoy only moderate appointments; whether you regard the ſacrifice made to attain them, or the duty required in their faithful execution. The man who removes ſo far from his native land, and breaks off every tie whether of affection or of blood, certainly merits ſome compenſation for the poſitive comforts and advantages which he thus foregoes.

When to this you add the dangers incurred from the climate, which even in its moſt favourable operation ſoon debilitates the conſtitution, and certainly ſhortens the period of life; it may readily be admitted that the enterpriſing ſpirit of the Company's ſervants is not extravagantly rewarded.

THAT a ſubaltern in the army, or a junior civil ſervant, after having incurred the expence of a long voyage, and a genteel education, ſhould receive a competent ſubſiſtence, for here it is no more, is certainly what he is entitled to in any part of the world. But from this frugality and decorum in the payment of the Company's ſervants, there have crept in many wide deviations.

YOU will in ſome inſtances find a ſingle individual and his family in the receipt of an annual ſalary almoſt ſufficient to defray the ordinary charge of a ſepoy battalion. Whether this be profuſion, partiality, or a generous retribution of ſervices, all muſt allow that it encroaches ſeverely upon that revenue, by which the empire in this part of the world muſt be defended. But withdrawing the means of defence is by no means the only effect of this unequal diſtribution of the revenue; it tends in various ways to encreaſe its danger.

SPLENDID fortunes ſuddenly accumulated, hold up a dazzling but falſe picture of the riches of our India poſſeſſions. The attention not only of the

country

country powers, but of every nation in Europe, is turned towards them with a jealous avidity. If any circumſtance more powerfully than another can provoke invaſion, it is this pernicious diſplay of imaginary, becauſe individual wealth.

Excessive affluence in the hands of a few is immediately deſtructive to every branch of the ſervice. Irregular living, gaming, and profuſion, are the immediate conſequences to all in the vicinity of one diſſipated civil ſervant of the Company. Young officers and writers are tempted to partake in all the indulgences of luxury; they engage in play, contract debt on exorbitant intereſt, and ruin approaches with irreſiſtible rapidity. Hence, while the exceſſive opulence of individuals holds up a bait to the enemies of the country, it debilitates and renders unſerviceable that body of men who are entruſted with its defence.

It is in this circumſtance that a reflecting mind would probably trace the decline of the Britiſh power in India. Extravagant fortunes, accumulated in the Eaſt, are carried home to be diſſipated in all the taſteleſs profuſion of new-gotten wealth. Manners become corrupted at home; new adventurers more diſſolute than the former arrive, who inſtead of checking, improve upon the vices of their predeceſſors. The army becomes diſſolute and neceſſitous; a ſtate in which it has ever proved leſs formidable to its enemies than its employers.

THE proper guidance, and virtuous adminiſtration of a government ſo expenſive as that of India; and the upright diſtribution of its revenue, proves an effort too great for the energy and virtue of any individual. In ſuch a ſtate of manners, effeminacy, corruption, debts, and treaſon, have gradually ariſen, and have in the courſe of ages diſſolved the connection of every European nation and its Aſiatic provinces, whoſe hiſtory has ever yet been recorded.

PERHAPS there is no certain grounds upon which you can claim an exemption to the Britiſh empire from the common cataſtrophe of nations. It is however comfortable to obſerve, that its government in India has hitherto continued to improve; both in the ſecurity and protection yielded to its native ſubjects, and in the equity of its conduct to the neighbouring powers. In the infancy of our power there was no regular controul over its operations. The ambition of a commander, or the exigencies of the treaſury, were ſometimes ſufficient motives to attack an independent and unoffending neighbour: and what is ſtill more pernicious and diſgraceful, the ingenuity of his avarice might diſcover treaſon in a province, merely to afford a pretence for its depredation.

IN proportion as Indian politics have become better known in Britain, remedies have been regularly provided for theſe evils. His preſent Majeſty, to whoſe care providence has committed the protection

of

of a larger portion of Aſiatic ſubjects, than ever fell under the dominion of any European monarch, enjoys alſo the peculiar felicity of ſeeing them better governed. For with all its imperfections the Britiſh government in India has operated with a more ſyſtematical and conſtant effect to the ſecurity of the natives, than that of any other power that has ever acquired dominion in Aſia.

From the different checks ariſing from its conſtituent parts, we have not now to apprehend violent or unprovoked attacks againſt its neighbours, nor the depredation of its provinces by unprincipled commanders. There is more imminent danger from a weak, inefficient adminiſtration, unable to overawe the diſaffected, check the diſſipated, or to intimidate the corrupt. The tendency of future times will perhaps lead to a government of expenſive jobs and expedients for the proviſion of relations and favourites. In an age not remarkable for the ſternneſs or inflexibility of its virtue, it will be difficult to find an individual of integrity and firmneſs to reſiſt the ſolicitations of favourites; and to do juſtice to the claims of merit or of ſervice. Farther accumulations of offices and emoluments may yet be heaped upon individuals and their friends; and thoſe ſeeds of degeneracy already begun to diſcloſe, may ripen into the full maturity of depravity; a ſtate cloſely bordering upon diſgrace and ruin. The revenue, inſtead of being employed to encreaſe the inveſtments, or to augment the military force, may be ſquandered away

way in empty parade, or laviſhed in the erection of phantaſtic buildings under the pretext of magnificence; but in reality to gratify the vanity of a weak and unprincipled governor.

In a quarter of the world ſo remote as India, Great Britain has perhaps more to fear from the diſloyalty of its army than from its diſſipation. The diſtant poſſeſſions of the Romans were more frequently loſt by the revolt of their legions, than by their inability to defend them againſt foreign enemies. Britain itſelf proclaimed one of its commanding officers emperor; and was for a while loſt to the ſtate. The legions in Germany frequently mutinied; thoſe entruſted with the defence of the Aſiatic provinces were often guilty of the greateſt exceſſes †.

All theſe misfortunes ſeemed the unavoidable conſequences of a diſſolute army entruſted to an unprincipled commander. The ſupreme executive power was never for a moment entruſted to other hands than the ſenate or the emperors. They had no officers fixed for life in particular provinces, which the executive power had not an acknowledged right to recal, and order upon whatever ſervice the general exigencies of the ſtate might require. When this is the caſe, the officers gradually loſe their attachment to the parent ſtate; all their intereſts centre in the

† Vid. Tacit. Hiſt. paſſim.

the particular diſtrict to which they are attached, and theſe they may conſider as directly oppoſite to that of the empire at large A body of officers whoſe attachments to their native country muſt be weakened in proportion to the time they have left it, and to the diſtance of their proſpect of returning, will unavoidably be influenced by an *eſprit du corps* dangerous to the ſtate. The ſituation of all is ſimilar; their intereſts are ſuppoſed to be the ſame; and it is impoſſible, while they feel uncontroulable power in their poſſeſſion, that they ſhould not exert it for their individual intereſt, rather than for that of their country.

In ſuch a ſituation, it is in vain to imagine that you can attach them to their country by conferring rank and emolument. The beſt paid troops in every country have ever become the moſt diſſolute and unprincipled; and a privileged corps with ſuperior pay, muſt in the end prove as dangerous as the pretorian bands of Rome, or the janiſſaries of Conſtantinople. If they are conſtituted without your authority, and are guided by a different power, you in reality acknowledge their independence. Their numbers, and their diſtance, render controul difficult, or impoſſible. They will ſoon feel this, and arrange not only their own ſervice, but the government of their province agreeably to their own ideas that is, their own pecuniary intereſt. In the form of humble advice, petition or remonſtrance, or in whatever language they may chooſe to veil their conduct, it will always prove

prove to their country the dictates of an army from whom it muſt receive the law.

If our troops therefore in India continue to act with the moderation and diſintereſtedneſs of dutiful ſubjects for a ſeries ages, they will overcome a temptation which has always proved irreſiſtible to the reſt of mankind; and exhibit to the world an example of virtue, of which its hiſtory has not yet recorded any well atteſted example.

The ſudden acquiſition of ſuch an extent of dominion as the Britiſh have obtained in Aſia, has produced a ſituation, for which its government had not ſufficient experience to enable it at once to frame adequate regulations. Farther experiments in maintaining power over diſtant territories will communicate more knowledge, and ſuggeſt other expedients more ſuitable to this purpoſe than a local, permanent, and independent army. It is probably owing to their diffidence of each other, or of the unenterpriſing character of our ſeapoys, that the empire has not already ſuſtained irreparable loſs, or been torn aſunder by ſuch a dangerous machine.

Into theſe general ſtrictures on the ſtate of India, no alluſion either to the praiſe or cenſure of any individual at preſent acting upon the ſcene, has been admitted. A particular detail of the character and actions of thoſe men who have conducted its affairs, cannot be done with impartiality till ſome ages after

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the individuals have retired. The perſon who would venture into the dangerous precincts of our recent biography, would probably ſoon have equal reaſon with the poet to exclaim,

"*Incedo ſuper ignes*
"*Suppoſitos cinere doloſo.*"

In the records of the Portugueze we may perhaps read our own fate; or at leaſt may behold a picture of their manners, which at ſome future period may prove too exact a reſemblance to our own. It is thus delineated by the Abbé Raynal, a writer who, however looſe and inaccurate in detailing ſome particular facts and cuſtoms, had ample means of becoming acquainted with the great outlines of the Portugueze conduct in Aſia.

"In a ſhort time they preſerved no more humanity, or good faith with each other, than with the natives. Almoſt all the ſtates, where they had the command, were divided into factions.

"There prevailed every where in their manners a mixture of avarice, debauchery, cruelty, and devotion. They had moſt of them ſeven or eight concubines, whom they kept to work with the utmoſt rigour, and forced from them the money they gained by their labour. Such treatment of women was very repugnant to the ſpirit of chivalry.

"The chiefs, and principal officers, retained a multitude of thoſe ſinging and dancing women, with which India abounds. Effeminacy introduced itſelf into their houſes and armies. The officers marched to meet the enemy in palanquins. That brilliant courage which had ſubdued ſo many nations, exiſted no longer among them. The Portugueze were with difficulty brought to fight, except where there was a proſpect of plunder. In a ſhort time the King of Portugal no longer received the tribute, which was paid him by three hundred and fifty eaſtern princes. This money was loſt in its way from them to him. Such corruptions prevailed in the finances, that the tribute of ſovereigns, the revenue of the provinces, which ought to have been immenſe, the taxes levied in gold and ſilver, and ſpices, on the inhabitants of the continent and iſlands, were not ſufficient to keep up a few citadels, and to fit out the ſhipping that was neceſſary for the protection of trade."

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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